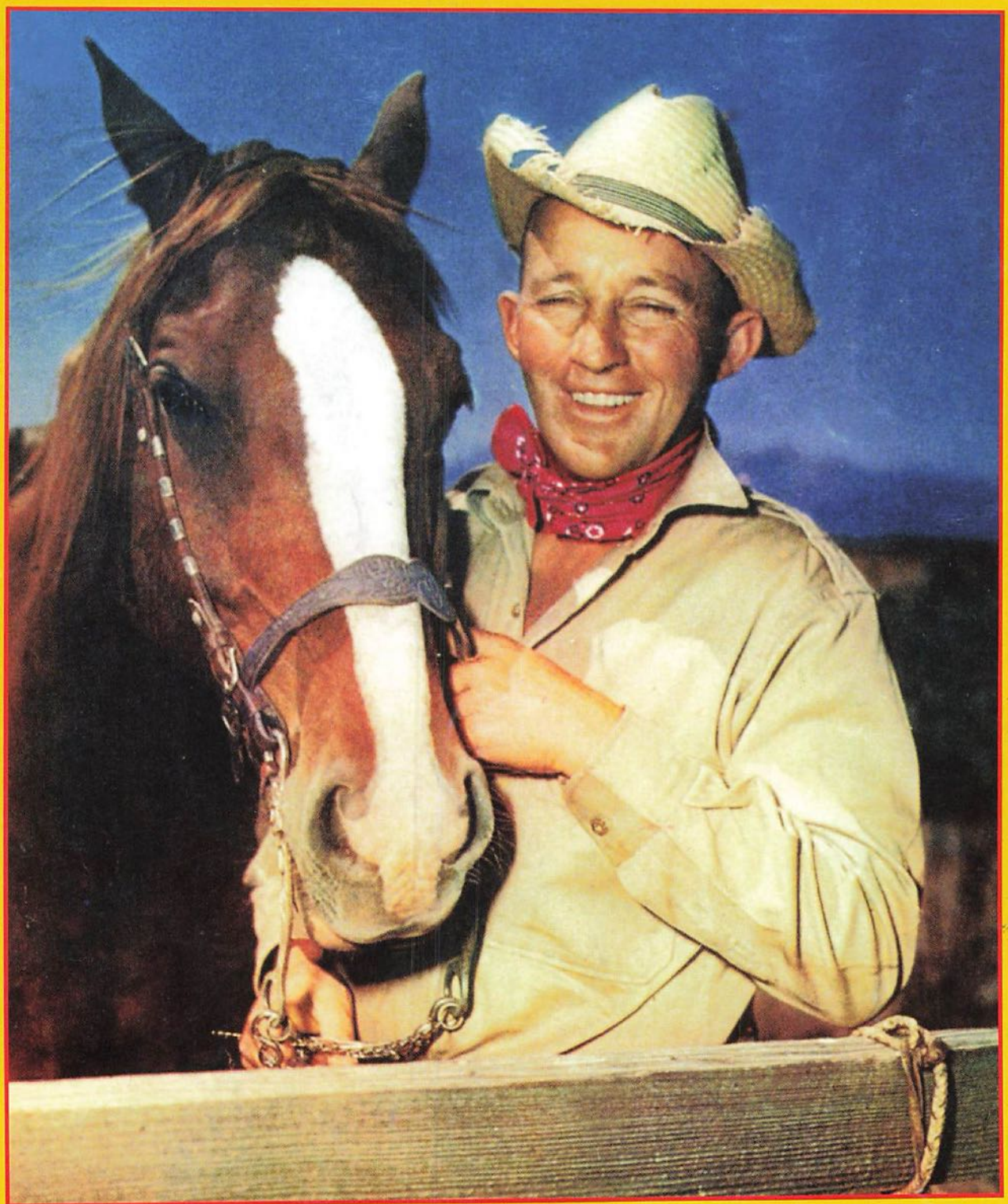
BING

Summer 2009

No. 152



THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

OUR MISSION: To perpetuate the memory and the musical legacy of Bing Crosby for the benefit of future generations

Web sites:
Club: www.club-crosby.org **BING magazine:** www.bingmagazine.co.uk
Bing Crosby Internet Museum: www.mcckc.edu/~crosby **Bing Crosby Enterprises:** www.BingCrosby.com

Honorary President: KATHRYN CROSBY
Honorary Members: Harry Crosby - Mary Crosby Brodka - Nathaniel Crosby - Phillip Crosby Jr. Ken Barnes - Pat Boone - Rory Burke - Michael Feinstein - Rich Little - Gia Prima - Andy Williams
Special Distribution: Gonzaga University - Hofstra University - Library of Congress - Tacoma Public Library - Spokane Public Library

Magazine Editor
MALCOLM MACFARLANE
3 Osborne Close
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 2EE, UK
Tel: 01625 528942
e-mail: Macwilmslo@aol.com

Secretary and Treasurer
MICHAEL CRAMPTON
19 Carrholm Crescent
Chapel Allerton
Leeds LS7 2NL , UK
Tel/Fax: 0113 2689556
e-mail: michael@club-crosby.org

American Co-Editor
GREG VAN BEEK
3006 Emerald Street,
West Bend
Wisconsin 53095, USA
Tel: (262) 338-8986
e-mail: tvanbeek@execpc.com

American / Canadian Representative
F.B. (Wig) WIGGINS
5608 North 34th Street
Arlington
Virginia 22207, USA
Tel/Fax: (703) 241-5608
e-mail: wigbing@hotmail.com

Australian / New Zealand Representative
DAVID CURRINGTON
34A Geoffrey Street,
Turramurra, New South Wales,
Australia 2074
Tel: (02) 9440 2434

CONTRIBUTORS
American Contributors: Bob Achorn / John Newton / Martin McQuade / Jon Oye / Carolyn Schneider / Judy Schmid
British Contributors: Bert Bishop / Ron Bosley / Ken Crossland / Keith Parkinson / John Walton
Canadian Contributor: Gord Atkinson

Membership renewals fall due on 1st. January each year and subscription rates effective for 2009 are:

USA and Canada	US $25 per annum
UK	£15 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£16 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A$40 per annum
Rest of World	£18 per annum

All remittances should be sent to Michael Crampton in **£ sterling** payable to *The International Club Crosby* with the exception of::
(a) American and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins
(b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

BING is the official journal of *The International Club Crosby* and is published in the spring, summer and winter of each year. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC.

All original material © Copyright ICC 2009.

EDITORIAL

Greetings to all my fellow ICC members, both old and new, and welcome to the summer issue of BING. If you haven't already done so, be sure to pick up a copy of the latest issue in the Sepia CD series of Bing Crosby's recordings, *Through The Years, Volume 3*. This new release begins up where volume two left off, and continues showcasing Bing's Decca recordings from 1951-52, in chronological order. Volume 4 is in the course of preparation and should be available in the Fall.

A must have for your Crosby library, as is *Bing & Satchmo,* the first widespread CD release of this classic 1960 album. My review of this important reissue appears elsewhere in the magazine.

Dolores Hope, widow of Bing's road pal Bob Hope, celebrated her 100th birthday on May 27th, a feat her husband also accomplished. We'd like to congratulate Mrs. Hope on reaching this milestone and wish her continued good health and happiness. Maureen Solomon reports on the birthday celebration later in this issue. Also I must mention the 44 cent U.S. postage stamp honoring Bob Hope that was unveiled on his May 29th birthday.

This year marks the 55th anniversary of Bing's classic holiday film, Irving Berlin's *White Christmas.* To mark the occasion, Paramount Home Video is preparing a new DVD release of the film for this fall with many extras. There will be a trailer of interviews with various family members and friends telling stories about Bing, and the making of the film. It promises to be an enjoyable new release, so be sure to look for it by November.

Here's Malcolm with more of what's in store.

Greg Van Beek

Thanks, Greg. We have just had news of a most exciting development on the horizon. A major issue of the recordings Bing did with Buddy Cole for radio is being planned. The late Les Gaylor used to mention these songs almost every time he wrote an article for the magazine and it's wonderful that a full scale release has now become a possibility. The reissue of the *Seasons* album has been delayed unfortunately but work is underway on it and on other Bing albums too.

As you will read later in this issue, the word "Bing" will now take on a new meaning for future generations as Microsoft have named their new search engine "Bing".

Sadly, **Bert Bishop** has had to step down as a regular contributor to the magazine. Dating back to the early 1970s, Bert has been a major contributor to the Crosby cause playing a key role in two ground-breaking discographies. Also he has undertaken several roles for the magazine including "Keeping Track" as well as his erstwhile "Bing on the Box" column. His description of the major series about Bing's life put out by the BBC in

1973, for instance, is a wonderful reference source for me when queries crop up about the programmes and there are so many other items which he covered in depth for us. Having now reached the age of 81 and with a fairly large property and garden to look after, Bert has, with regret, decided that it's time for someone else to take his place. He asks me to pass on his thanks to all those who have kept him going with cassettes and other news over the years which was then printed within the magazine. Are there any volunteers to take over his column?

The Leeds event is on the horizon and whilst it will have a very similar format to last year, we understand that a number of members are coming from abroad. Michael Crampton and I will meet them on the Saturday evening for a meal and any other members who would like to join us will be very welcome. Greg Van Beek has supplied some more rare items on DVD and I have prepared some other DVD presentations as well.

The usual varied types of article are contained within this issue. Features about Bing's first and second families, John Newton describes some more rare recordings and Jane Stoutenborough reports on an important Kathryn Crosby event in New York. A fascinating debate on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum about Bing's recordings with Billy May is reproduced and of course all the regulars, apart from Bert, are present too.

Our thanks to Jon Oye for the image used on the back cover. Jon has supplied me with a good number of similar covers which we shall use in future editions.

Malcolm Macfarlane

CONTENTS

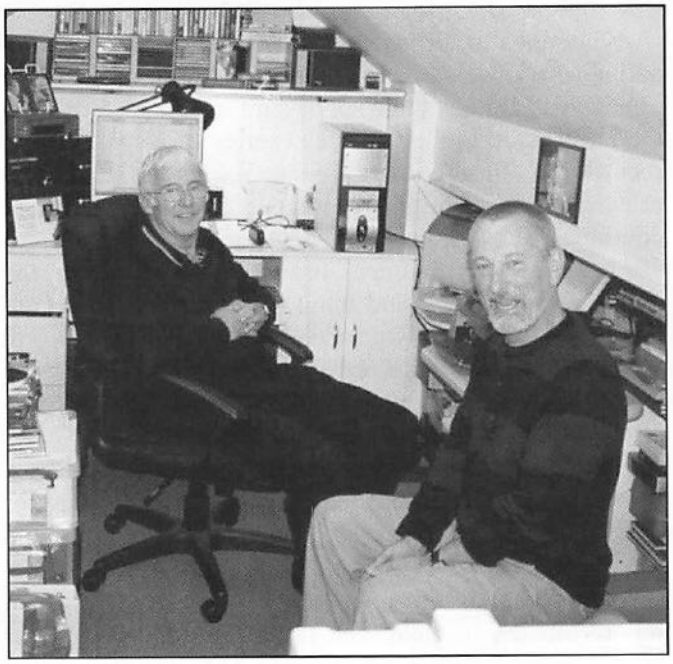
	Page Nos.
Editorial	3
Secretary / Treasurer's Report	4
Bing: On the Road to Elko	5
"Bing! I'm Home"	6
Introducing Bing	7
An Evening With Bob DeFlores	7
Bing and Bob on the road	8
Listening To Frank And Bing	8
The Rhythm Boys in Boston	8
Bing's Public Service Announcements	10
Just a Prayer Away	11
Trading Post.	15
Books 'n' Bing	17
"You're Not A Flop, Dad!"	18
A couple of Bing sightings or soundings	21
Bing Crosby and Talache	22
Celluloid Crosby.	23
The A-Z Of Bing's Movies	24
Dolores Hope's 100th Birthday	26
The Crosbys: In their own way, they're a great team	27
My Life with Bing	32
Anyone Seen Val Doonican?	33
One Sweet Letter From You	35
The Billy May albums	37
Bing On The Box	42
Once In A While	45
Gord Atkinson's 'The Crosby Years'	46
More of Bing's rarest records	47
Keeping Track.	50
The Road to Maidenhead	53
The Microsoft Bing	53
Leeds 2009	54

SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

As Malcolm has mentioned, Bert Bishop, long time contributor to BING, has decided to relinquish his role with the ICC as of this issue. Bert has been and remains a great Crosby stalwart and his joint authorship of 'Bing - Just For The Record' and The Bing Crosby LP-Ography assure Bert of an honoured place amongst Crosby collectors. We wish Bert every success in his future endeavours.

The second batch of Woodbury CDs has now been distributed to members and it is a pleasure to report that these copies were received as enthusiastically as the first batch. A few copies remain for sale so please contact me or Wig if you would like to obtain one.

We were very pleased to welcome David Currington to the UK in April and he visited Editor Malcolm, Ron Bosley and myself during his stay. David is a very keen photographer and he captured Malcolm and me in my office.



Michael (right) entertains your Editor in the Club's HQ.

NEW MEMBERS

It is a pleasure to welcome the following new members to the ICC and we trust that through their membership they will gain friends and deepen their knowledge and understanding of Bing's unsurpassed career.

UNITED KINGDOM

Alex Briggs Allan (Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear), Fred J Hilton (Prestbury, Cheshire), Gary Paylor (Whitby, North Yorkshire).

DONATIONS

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support provided by the following members.

Jack Winegrad, Bill Wesley, Mark Matelart, Frank Challenger, John Walton, Harry C Ross, Bill England, George O'Reilly, Mrs B A Sellers, Doreen Hubbard, Jean Rainey, Paul Henessey and Arthur Blood.

DEATHS

With sadness we draw members attention to the passing of the following members.

Mr J A Britton (South Benfleet, Essex), Tony Corben (Portsmouth, Hampshire), Paul H Doye (Beccles, Suffolk).

We extend our sincere condolences to family and friends.

BING CROSBY – THROUGH THE YEARS Vols 1, 2 & 3 (Sepia Records)

These attractive CDs remain available from me with the price for the UK being £6.50 and the price for Europe

being £7.00. Members in the US & Canada should obtain their copies from Wig Wiggins. The price for members in the rest of the world is £8. Volume 4 in this important series will be available in October and you should order by returning the order form supplied in your magazine.

CALENDAR 2009

Ron Bosley's attractive calendar, featuring scenes from Bing's films, is still available from me at £5.75 UK and £6.50 for other European destinations. US/Canadian members should contact Wig to obtain their calendars. Ron was busily working on the 2010 calendar as we went to press.

David Currington (left) and Ron Bosley examine one of Ron's many scrapbooks during a recent visit.

LEEDS 2009

Sunday October 4th 2009 is the day and we look forward to welcoming our guests who can be assured of a very interesting programme. Malcolm Macfarlane has prepared a sequel to his much admired feature for 2008 and we will be welcoming first time visitors from Sweden, Germany and Australia. Please come along and enjoy our 44th tribute to Bing's musical legacy.

Until winter, my kindest regards to all members.

Michael Crampton

The Buddy Cole tracks

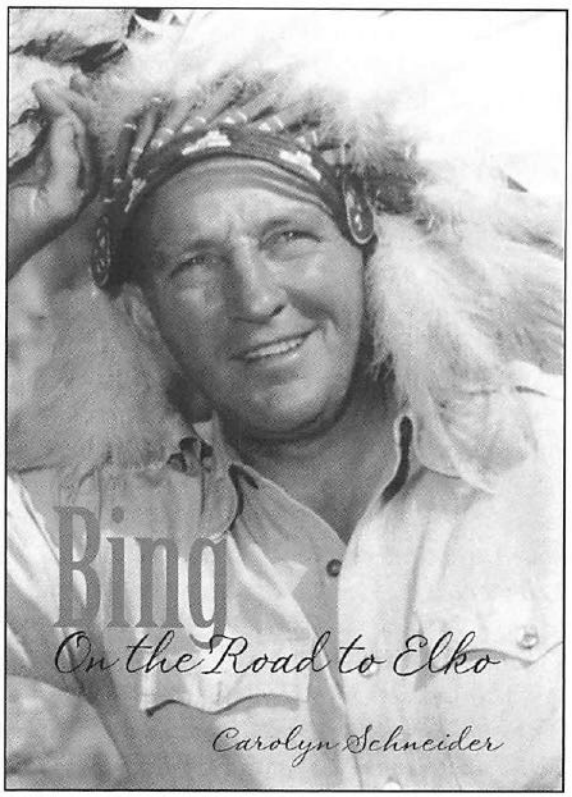
We mentioned the exciting developments with these tracks in our Editorial and here is the news release from Bing Crosby Enterprises we received just as we went to press.

Bing Crosby Enterprises has undertaken a long-range project which includes restoring the original radio master tapes from Bing's shows for CBS with Buddy Cole and his trio. We'll be updating the status of this project on www.BingCrosby.com as well as the winter 2009 edition of BING magazine! Stay tuned for some exciting news! "Seasons", along with many of Bing's other albums made between 1956 and 1977, are in line for a fresh digital remastering, and we'll be sharing word on their new releases SOON!

(Editor: This is wonderful news and the challenge for us will be to remain patient as plans are put together. There are often legal complications with projects such as these which have to be worked out first before matters can proceed. If further information becomes available by the time I'm proof-reading this issue, I'll slot it in.

At least something is happening and this situation was given fresh urgency following a visit I made to the large HMV store in Manchester recently. Plenty of Nat King Cole, Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra CDs on display, some Como's and even a couple of Al Jolson albums but not one Bing CD! Very worrying.)

BING: On the Road to Elko



Carolyn Schneider's new book will be available in the Fall. It documents her Uncle Bing's involvement in the Elko area and his ranching activities from start to finish. The book contains more than 50 photos (some never previously published) and it will have a foreword by Howard Crosby. Retailing at $20.00 (plus $4.00 postage

and packing) in the USA, it can be obtained direct from Carolyn at 9811 W. Charleston Blvd. #2-185, Las Vegas, Nevada 89117 (phone: 702-240-8570) or (email: artist71635@msn.com). Due to a special arrangement with the publisher Carolyn requests that you order the book directly from her. Carolyn will gladly autograph and inscribe the book to all purchasers. Arrangements are being made to have a supply of the books sent to the UK and a flyer will be inserted with the winter edition of this magazine giving details of how to obtain a copy.

"Bing! I'm Home": Regis Philbin Visits Gonzaga University

Stephanie Plowman, Gonzaga's Special Collections librarian, tells us all about it.

Those were the words shouted by TV celebrity Regis Philbin when he walked on the lawn of Bing Crosby's boyhood home at Gonzaga University. Regis was in Spokane on March 21 to perform at a casino that night. While in town he wanted to visit Crosby's house and collection at Gonzaga.

Regis' connection to Bing began when Regis was a boy growing up in Brooklyn in the 1930s. He remembers listening to the radio during the Depression and hearing Bing sing uplifting songs like "Pennies from Heaven". He said that those songs helped him through the hard times. In 1967 when Regis worked on the "Joey Bishop Show" Bing was a guest. To get Bing to sing, Joey Bishop told Bing that Regis was his number one fan and that it would be great if he could sing to him. Bing turned to Regis and sang "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral". After a commercial break, Joey suggested that Bing and Regis sing "Pennies from Heaven". The following morning Regis received a recording contract based upon that performance. Regis never met Bing again. To this day, he credits Bing for influencing his life.

In February 2009 Regis announced on his television show "Live with Regis and Kelly" that he was coming to the Pacific Northwest to perform and while in Spokane he wanted to see Bing Crosby's house. After hearing this, I immediately emailed him to say that the Gonzaga University Alumni Association owned Crosby's boyhood home on campus. I invited him to contact me and said I would be happy to give him a tour.

On his show the next day, Regis mentioned that he had heard that Gonzaga had Crosby's house and the student center was named after him. He said "I get to sleep in Bing's bed!" He stated that he wanted to learn more about the history of Bing Crosby, the most important entertainer in American culture. To encourage Regis to come, the Gonzaga library sent him and Kelly a gift box of items from Bing's birthday bash in May 2003. A week later on his show, Regis showed a T-shirt, golf balls, and Carolyn Schneider's book *Me and Uncle Bing*.

At the same time, Regis' publicist contacted me to ask about a tour of the house and the Crosby Collection. For the next few weeks, she and I worked out the arrangements. ABC, who carries his show, was the only local media given permission to cover the story.

Regis arrived on Saturday, March 21 at noon in a stretch limo with his agent and his music director at the Crosby Alumni House. On the tour with me was Library Dean Eileen Bell-Garrison, and Eileen's son Davey, our videographer. As soon as he faced the house, Regis boomed "Bing, I'm home!" in his Regis style. I showed him photocopies of aerial views of campus taken around the time of Bing's tenure at Gonzaga so that he could appreciate how the neighborhood looked during his day. What stood out the most for Regis was how close Bing lived to campus.

As we walked to the Crosby Student Center, I pointed out St. Aloysius Church where Bing was an altar boy and the family attended church. I also told him the campus folklore story that Bing was kicked out of school, because he threw a piano from the roof of DeSmet Hall, a boy's dormitory. This did not actually happen, as Bing left school prior to the construction. But this story continues at Gonzaga.

At the Crosby Student Center we were met by the local ABC station to film him looking at the Crosbyana Room. Regis looked carefully around the room and remarked that it was a "great collection". We went out front of the building to look at the Crosby statue which included the seldom seen pipe. Regis posed by the statue.

Regis Philbin with Stephanie Plowman in the Special Collections vault. Regis is holding "Beans" (Stephanie's daughter's classroom mascot).

We then walked to the Foley Center Library to see more Crosby items in the Special Collections vault. Once there, ABC interviewed him for a local morning show. I put Crosby memorabilia in the background as a backdrop. While looking at the items, he grabbed Crosby's pipe and hat and put on the hat and stuck the pipe in his mouth! I was shocked but did not say anything.

After the interview, I showed him the Crosby materials in the vault. He enjoyed looking at the items and seeing how they were organized. He said such a collection should be maintained at a university to have enough space to properly store and organize it.

At the end of the tour, he gave us tickets for that night's performance. During the show, Regis talked about how Bing was important to him and reported briefly on his Crosby tour. He did not sing any Crosby songs, except for a few lines from "Pennies from Heaven". Afterwards, when Eileen and I visited him in his dressing room, I asked him if he always talks about Bing during his performances or was it just because he was in Spokane. Regis said that he always talks about him, because of his importance.

Per his request, we did not let students or the public know of his presence on campus. However, that did not keep students from recognizing him and coming up for a photo. Regis was always gracious and willing to have his photo taken. He even waved through the windows of the Crosby Student Center to a group of students gathered outside.

When talking to the newscaster prior to his interview, he asked her if she had heard of Bing. She said "Not until the day before." He replied: "That is the whole damn problem. People don't know Bing Crosby". During the tour he said that Bing was "an enormous man and tremendous influence" on him. Regis is truly an advocate for Bing Crosby.

I found Regis to be very personable and funny. Throughout the 75 minute tour, he peppered me with questions and made funny remarks. I was impressed by how much he knew about Bing. After his return to New York, on his television show the following Monday, he discussed his trip and showed photographs of his Crosby tour. He praised the collection and said that he had enjoyed himself. He also thanked me personally for his memorable tour. I, too, will never forget this experience.

Stephanie Plowman

Introducing Bing

Those of you who do not have Internet access may, nevertheless, have heard of Google, a search engine which helps people find what they are looking for on the Web. Now, there's a new search engine and it's called "Bing". Microsoft issued the following briefing some weeks ago.

You probably didn't wake up today expecting an entirely new search experience. But — Bing! — here it is.

So, why a new search engine? Why the new name? Why now? Well, because even though search is a pretty amazing thing, the current state of search engines has some equally amazing statistics.

So far in 2009, there are four and a half websites created EVERY SECOND as the web continues to expand. While more searchable information is cool, nearly half of all searches don't result in the answer that people are seeking.

At the same time, the way the world searches is changing. You want more than just information. You want knowledge that leads to action.

The truth is you've evolved. It's time search caught up. So we had an idea. Start over. And we did.

We took a new approach to go beyond search to build what we call a decision engine. With a powerful set of intuitive tools on top of a world class search service, Bing will help you make smarter, faster decisions. We included features that deliver the best results, presented in a more organized way to simplify key tasks and help you make important decisions faster.

And features like cashback, where we actually give you money back on great products, and Price Predictor, which actually tells you when to buy an airline ticket in order to help get you the best price — help you make smarter decisions, and put money back in your pocket.

We sincerely hope that the next time you need to make an important decision, you'll Bing and decide.
Thank you,

Bing Team, Microsoft

(Editor: We still don't really know why they chose the name Bing but they did—and it gave our man a lot of mentions in the press when it was announced. Perhaps Bill Gates read the Bingville Bugle when he was a child too!)

An Evening With Bob DeFlores

Last year, KBEM Jazz 88 Radio in Minneapolis initiated its innovative REEL Jazz Film Series, bringing classic documentary footage tracing jazz legends and more to the theater at Bryant Lake Bowl in south Minneapolis. Now in its second season of monthly screenings, REEL Jazz provides not only a visual feast of America's great art form but also opportunities to enjoy some of the area's up-and-coming as well as accomplished jazz musicians, who open each film night with an inspiring set. On May 7, the presentation was "An Evening With Bob DeFlores." Bob hosted a rare screening of *The Edsel Show*, starring Bing with Frank Sinatra, Rosemary Clooney and Louis Armstrong. Opening the evening was a pre-concert performance by local Bing and Frank expert, vocalist **Arne Fogel** (host of *The Bing Shift* on KBEM), accompanied by Rick

Carlson.

Film historian-preservationist **Bob DeFlores** grew up in Hollywood immersed in showbiz culture—his parents were actors who appeared in film and nightclubs. Bob began collecting and restoring films in 1953, amassing a library that now includes 6,000 works, including rare newsreels, cartoon shorts, sports footage, full-length features, and jazz and big band material.

Bing and Bob on the road

Jim Tufaro is an Emmy Award winning camera operator with an interesting hobby. He makes maquettes.

A **maquette** (French word for scale model) is a small scale model or rough draft of an unfinished architectural work or a sculpture. Jim cranks out likenesses and wields his tools to create astounding bases and displays. What's this got to do with Bing? Well, Jim has put together a tribute piece for Bing and Bob's "Road" films.

Jim's clever idea of a lost footage/publicity still/Paramount Pictures prop department maquette brought to life is beautifully crafted and even has real sand. Only two will ever be made says Jim. His aim was to create the spirit and essence of Bob and Bing at their finest. To get all the specifics regarding this and other creations, those with Internet access should go to www.madgeppetto.com and see for yourself.

Jim tells me he has just put the finishing touches on our boy as Father O'Malley. He's being very secretive about this tribute piece and even more cautious about the soon to be available Christmas Crosby! Bing complete with Santa suit and ready to Ho, Ho, Ho his holiday cheer! He'll tell us more in due course.

Listening To Frank And Bing

Your editor is not a great fan of poetry but this ode submitted by Leslie Miller made me smile.

Once we owned a gramophone
that made the records go round and round.
It had a handle on the side of it
by which the mechanism was wound.
Bing, Frank and the great dance bands
were what I listened to in those bygone days
When life was so much simpler, in oh so many ways.
Next we owned a record player
that required a point to plug it in.
No more need to wind the handle
to make the record start to spin.
The tape cassette player was our next possession
The tapes came in a compact case.
But later when the tapes became stretched and broken
Something new had to take its place.
The compact disc player was the answer to that problem
No more having to wind the handle
or change the record after hearing the vocalist sing.
Now I hear there are other ways to listen to the music
Things I don't know much about - such as iPod and things.
But it all started with that old wind up gramophone
And you will still find me listening to Frank and Bing.

Leslie Miller

Bing in the crosswords

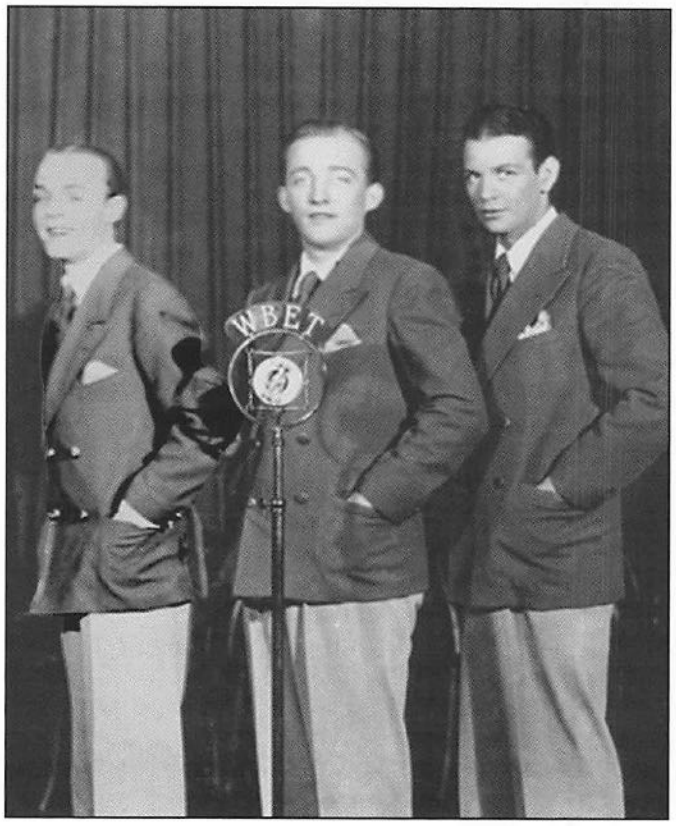
We sometimes hear of Bing being used in some way as a clue in a crossword and the latest example was from a Daily Mail crossword and was sent in by Arthur Blood. The clue is "Bing Crosby played organ with Queen (7)". The answer can be found on page 37.

The Rhythm Boys in Boston

Greg Van Beek looks at the opposite ends of Bing's career.

To discover a photo from the earliest days of Bing's career is always a treat. To find a pose that's new to even the most ardent fans and collectors is a major find. Such was the case when I purchased several vintage 4" x 5" photos from the *Photoplay* magazine archive recently.

One photo in particular caught my eye. On the back of the photo, written in pencil, was the year 1928. It was unmistakably Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys, with a very young Bing Crosby centered between Harry Barris and Al Rinker, posed behind a vintage "hotplate" style microphone. This microphone would provide the clue to be able to not only date the photo, but provide a location as well.



The microphone had the call letters WBET around the top frame. I decided to do a Google search to see if this radio station was still in operation. I soon discovered that station WBET was located in Boston, MA. It signed on the air for its first broadcast on April 20, 1927. On February 15, 1929, facing numerous expenses and on-going technical problems, WBET is sold and moved to Lexington, where it becomes WLEX. So this information told me that this photo was taken prior to February 15, 1929.

I sent this information to my co-editor Malcolm Macfarlane, who wrote the book *Bing Crosby: Day By Day* chronicling Bing's activities literally on a daily basis. From this information, Malcolm was able to determine that the Rhythm Boys were in the Boston area during the period of April 27 to May 10, 1928, when the Paul Whiteman Orchestra undertook an engagement at the Metropolitan Theater in Boston. On May 1 and May 8, the band's performance at the Theater was broadcast over station WBET with the Rhythm Boys singing several songs on each occasion. This photo of a 25 year-old Bing Crosby serves as an historical artifact of one of his first appearances on the medium that would play a major part in his rise to fame as a solo artist in just a few short years.

Bing & Satchmo

Ken Crossland gave us advance notice of an important event in the last issue of the magazine. Bing Crosby and Louis Armstrong...backed by Billy May's Orchestra. It doesn't get any better than this! And now..FINALLY..this classic 1960 studio album has been lovingly restored to all its stereo brilliance and released in its entirety by DRG Records, in conjunction with EMI/Capitol. It seems fitting, too, that it should make its debut in 2009, the centennial of the man who hand picked the songs for this project (and contributes a cameo vocal on "Lazy River"), the great Johnny Mercer.

Every track from this historic musical summit is here, even including a bonus cut that was recorded during the sessions, but only originally released on a 1963 benefit album for the United Nations. Never before, save for a long out of print and impossible to find 1990 Australian release on the AXIS label, has this album been issued so completely on CD. For those who think they've heard all of Billy May's finest charts, you're in for a real treat!

The partnership of "Mr. Satch & Mr. Croz" is in itself legendary. They met back in the late 1920's and remained friends until Armstrong's death in 1971. They made their first recording (and film) together in 1936, and Armstrong was a staple of Crosby's late 1940s and early '50s radio shows. It was from a 1951 Crosby show that their first hit single originated, "Gone Fishin'". Five years later came arguably Crosby's best film musical, *High Society*, featuring the musical tour de force "Now You Has Jazz", the best record of these two icons together on film and a song that remained in Crosby's repertoire up to his death in 1977 (he last performed it in concert 4 days before his death).

The success of *High Society*, and a September 1959 Crosby TV special featuring Armstrong, became the impetus for this album, recorded in late June / early July 1960 for MGM Records and Crosby's own label Project Records. Crosby owned the masters, and it is said that he sold them to Capitol Records in the 1970s, where an abridged version was released following Crosby's death in 1977. A handful of tracks appeared on two so-called 'greatest hits' packages of both Bing and Louis respectively in the early 1990s on the Curb label. This version contains the original cover artwork from the 1960 MGM LP release, as well as the original album track line up.

And what gems these songs are, with special material for each penned by the equally legendary Johnny Mercer himself. "Muskrat Ramble", with an elaborate arrangement that sounds as if it's the opening number for a mammoth television special, starts things off, followed by an absolutely sublime rendition of "Sugar", with Crosby's voice sounding every bit like the 'liquid gold being poured from a cup' as Satchmo once described it, while his trumpet solos soar in the background. "Dardanella" makes effective use of Bing's deep resonant voice, the timbre of which was unequalled, and you'd be hard pressed to find a more definitive reading of "Way Down Yonder In New Orleans" than the one heard here by these two jazz icons. A 1939 tune penned by Armstrong called "Brother Bill" is clever and infectiously funny throughout (with Bing referring to he and Armstrong as 'two nimrods'). "At

The Jazz Band Ball" could be a sequel to "Now You Has Jazz" in the way it further elaborates on the origins of jazz. Mercer's own composition, "Rocky Mountain Moon" is owned by Crosby. His vocal on it is classic Crosby...smooth, easy, deep, rich and gorgeous. In all, both men were in fine voice for this project. Every bit as good as they sounded on "Gone Fishin'" nine years earlier... with the added benefit of stereo sound here.

The album packaging is first rate, with a lengthy essay by noted jazz expert Will Friedwald, who attempts to clear up the mystery once and for all of whether or not this album was done live, or if Bing and Louis recorded their vocals to a pre-recorded orchestral track. There are period photos throughout the booklet (including a rare pose of Mercer and Crosby rehearsing for the latter's October 1960 TV special). This is an album that should please not only fans of the vocal talents of Bing Crosby and Louis Armstrong, but also those legions of fans of arranger / conductor extraordinaire, the masterful Billy May.

Don't miss this one...grab it while it's still in print. It hasn't been around in such a complete form for nearly 50 years!

Greg Van Beek

Cowboys & Indians magazine

The July 2009 issue of *Cowboys & Indians magazine,* the premier magazine of the West, features a lengthy article on Bing's Country Legacy.

Contributor Jordan Rane authored the piece titled "How The West Was Crooned, Remembering The Cowboy in Bing", which is exceptionally well researched, and illustrated with many great western-themed photos of Bing, a number of which are previously unpublished. Jordan also conducted an interview with Bing's daughter Mary, who shares some delightful 'inside' information on the cowboy side of Bing and the Crosbys' Rising River Ranch days.

You'll definitely want to add this high quality, keepsake magazine to your collection. In addition to Bing, it features a cover story on John Wayne, whose family shares their memories of him and his legacy, looking back on the thirty years since his death.

Greg Van Beek

Bing's Public Service Announcements

Greg's article in BING #148 (Spring 2008) stimulated a lot of interest and since then he has obtained information on some more promotional PSA records that feature Bing. Greg lists the details for us here. They are 12" 33 1/3 rpm, Two-sided unless indicated.

American Heart Association

(a) 1960 Heart Sunday announcements Feb. 1-29. Features promotional spots with many different stars of the day. Apart from Bing (who has a PSA on side one), there's Jack Benny and Dennis Day, Anthony Quinn, Ed Sullivan, Kathryn Grayson, Ed Wynn, David Niven, June Allyson, Joan Crawford, Judy Holiday, Ernie Kovacs, Tony Perkins, Jimmy Durante, Jose Ferrer, Polly Bergen, Joan Collins, Alfred Drake, James Arness, Ann Blyth, Gregory Peck, Donna Reed, Richard Rodgers, and Hoagy Carmichael.

(b) 1967 Heart Fund – February. American Heart Association ET-3. Bing has a PSA on side two.

(c) 1968 campaign record ET 3. Heart Sunday spots. Bing has a PSA on side two.

The American Legion AAVP #27186

PSA record, circa 1960's. Bing has a: 30 PSA (undated, circa 1960's)

Brotherhood week

(a) Campaign spots for February 21-28, 1954, sponsored by National Conference of Christians and Jews. The disc features PSA's from Bing and from stars such as Perry Como, Groucho Marx, Bob Hope, Phil Harris, Alice Faye, Jack Webb, Faye Emerson, Arthur Godfrey, Paul Whiteman, Larry Parks, Eve Arden, John Lund and Lionel Barrymore.

(b) RKO-WOR Sound Studios NY #107963. Campaign spots for Feb. 14-23 1958, again sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews. 20 second campaign spot. Bing speaks along with Alfred Hitchcock, Guy Lombardo, Rock Hudson and Tennessee Ernie Ford.

1959 CHP (California Highway Patrol)

Traffic safety. Bing recorded a PSA. Red vinyl

Catholic Bishops' Overseas Aid Fund

(a) 1968 appeal. A specially recorded all-star show to assist the Catholic Bishops' Overseas Aid Fund Appeal. Side one: The Crosby Cavalcade featuring Bing Crosby & songs with Ken Carpenter.

(b) BRAC #11972 - appears to be circa 1972. Celebrity Fund Appeal LP. Bing has a :60 PSA

City of Hope (Pilot Medical Center) Radio Announcements LP. #URR1553. One sided LP, circa 1960's. Bing has a :60 PSA.

Deafness Research Foundation. 1960's Celebrity spots, includes a PSA from Bing.

Diabetes Detection Drive

(a) 1968 Diabetes Week Nov. 16-23, Bing has a :60 & :20 spot

(b) 1969 Diabetes Week. Personality Series - Spot Announcements. Bing has a :60 and :20 spot on side A.

(c) 1971 Diabetes Week Nov. 16-23, :30 spot by Bing.

Freedom's Roll Call

"Celebrity Platter". Recorded statements on behalf of the American Way. (Bing has a spot on Side B)

Louis Braille Foundation for Blind Musicians PSA record. Circa 1960's. Bing recorded a 1:30 PSA.

1977 Lung Association

Side one: Celebrity Spots (Bing has a :60 spot)

Side two: Favorite Songs. Bing's 1976 recording of "The Night Is Young & You're So Beautiful" is included, (with special introduction by Bing over dubbed), plus one song each by The Commodores, Keane Brothers, Anson Williams, Bread.

1969 March of Dimes campaign records

(a) ER 2098, Jan. 1-31, 1969. Bing has a PSA on side 2.
(b) ER-2097 The 1969 March of Dimes. (Bing has a :10 and :25 second spot on side A)

Minute Maid Orange Juice Announcements.

4 identical cuts of one-minute musical announcement circa mid 1950's. Red vinyl, one-sided LP on Empire label

Navy Day one-sided record, XT 12328 / F9-ME-8638. October 27, 1955. Bing Crosby spots.

Stars Speak for the YMCA. circa 1960's. Bing recorded a PSA

UNM-2 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees promotional record for All-Star Festival album, 1963. One side has interviews with Louis Armstrong, Yul Brynner and Maurice Chevalier. Bing has two promotional spots on the other side. One solo and one with Louis Armstrong.

Just a Prayer Away

Martin McQuade looks at yet another aspect of Bing's career.

Our commercial differs from the ordinary commercial in that we're not trying to sell you something. We want to give you something absolutely free. Our product doesn't come wrapped in a bright gleaming package nor is it heralded by bold, world-wide advertising. We have no box tops or coupons to dispense. Our market is unlimited. We don't have to restrict our appeals solely to men or to women or to children for, well, it appeals to all mankind regardless of age, race or color. Our product has no competition because it is the greatest and most sought after commodity that the world has to offer. It is not manufactured in a great mill nor conjured up in a laboratory nor even grown in a fertile field. What is this product? One single word names and describes it but what a vast meaning that one word conveys. The word is happiness. And to be more exact family happiness for that is the greatest happiness that man will experience in this life. There is only one tool necessary for the manufacture of this product and that tool is prayer - family prayer - because hand – in –hand with family happiness goes family unity.

These comments are spoken by Bing Crosby at the end of "The Losers," an episode of the radio and television series called "Family Theater." (1947-1969). The words seem to mirror so many of the uplifting and optimistic songs which Crosby fancied throughout his career. It is supremely fitting that he would be one of the primary catalysts for this cavalcade of inspirational dramas.

"Family Theater" was the dream of a Catholic priest, Father Patrick Peyton (1909-1992). An Irish immigrant, Peyton joined the Congregation of The Holy Cross, being drawn to its credo that family unity is essential for the attainment of spiritual and physical fulfillment. His work with homeless families in Indiana while at Notre Dame, the outbreak of World War Two, and finally, a near death experience with tuberculosis, launched Fr. Peyton on a crusade to promote the value and the power of prayer.

While assigned as chaplain of the Holy Cross Brothers of the Vincentian Institute in Albany, New York, and hosting a local religious program, he devised a bold idea. Why not a weekly national radio series to advance his dream? He reached out to all the major radio networks. With no money to offer, he had no success. Then he had another brainstorm. He approached an executive at the struggling Mutual Radio Network. This was a maverick organization, having pre-recorded some of its programs, such as "The Shadow," as early as the summer of 1938 (preceding "The Philco Show" by eight years). Strategically lowering his sights, Fr. Peyton made a simple offer. *Would you give me just one hour if you had a big movie star on the program and if you didn't have to pay for that star?* The answer was direct. *Movie star – sure – of course – if we don't have to pay. But who's going to get one for nothing?* Undaunted, Fr. Peyton replied, *I am!* His bravado concealed the fact that he had no one lined up, but Fr. Peyton knew that if he could recruit the most powerful personality in show business, there would be easy sailing.

He placed a call on Good Friday, 1945 to Bing Crosby who was at RKO filming *The Bells of St. Mary's.* Within days Crosby returned the call. *I am a priest from Albany. Would you do something for The Blessed Virgin?* Such audacious salesmanship must have seemed like life reflecting art. It is remarkably similar to Fr. O'Malley's unorthodox appeal to Mr. Bogardus to offer his building to St. Mary's school. As Fr. Peyton elaborated his cause, Crosby became increasingly intrigued. With the priestly pitch done, he consented to headline the show. The reverend's gamble paid off handsomely.

The next day Fr. Peyton told the Mutual executive, *Mr. Crosby will sing for us for nothing if you give me a full hour.* He incredulously replied, *Crosby, you mean Bing Crosby?* The affirmation of this gilt-edged endorsement led to a nationwide hookup for "The Chapel of the Air" and a chain reaction of other wonders. Crosby said *yes* to a 7am rehearsal! President Truman agreed to make an address. The parents of the five Sullivan boys who died on the same warship in the South Pacific, pledged to lead in the praying of the Rosary. Frances Cardinal Spellman of New York volunteered to speak and bring along the St. Patrick's Cathedral choir as well.

Father Peyton with Bing

The Cardinal was helpful on another front. It was deemed important to secure Mother's Day, May 13, to emphasize the need for family prayer. The holiday, however, was already assigned by Mutual to a Protestant group. Fr. Peyton simply would not settle for the following Sunday. Last minute diplomacy from the New York Archdiocese's office facilitated a swap of time slots which proved to be fortuitous. Right before the show came the German surrender and VE Day. The President called for a day of Thanksgiving on the very date of the broadcast. This confluence of events made for a media sensation.

Although "The Chapel of the Air" originated in New York, Crosby spoke from Hollywood. Here is an excerpt from his remarks as heard on that historic broadcast.

> *"I want my children to pray in our home, as well as in our church. That is why I want them to believe as I believe, in the true glory and true greatness and true significance of the Family Rosary. In our home we believe in the Family Rosary as a great force working for good, working for good against evil. We believe that today, as never before, this vital force for good is necessary if we are to fashion from the holocaust of war the framework of lasting peace. As Christians, as Americans we believe in the power and the necessity of family prayer in all homes. As Catholics, we believe the Family Rosary to be the perfect family prayer."*

Three hundred stations carried the show, which was also short-waved to members of the armed services. The broadcast was universally embraced and the reviews were excellent. *Variety* singled out Crosby for praise in its issue of May 16 1945, noting that he *had a simple but perfectly phrased script which he read superbly.* Mutual was bombarded by requests that the show be repeated. With donations flooding in, Fr. Peyton was emboldened to repeat his initial request. *Why not every week?* Mutual was reluctant, fearing that a Catholic based show would have limited appeal. Fr. Peyton had a simple solution. Since his vision essentially encompassed all faiths, the show would be non-sectarian. Its simple message of hope would transcend denominational barriers.

Mutual gave the green light, provided that Fr. Peyton could guarantee major Hollywood attractions. Crosby was among the first to commit. This provided the impetus for other top ranked stars, musicians, writers and technicians to flock to Fr. Peyton and to settle for the scale salaries dictated by union laws. This enabled him to solicit the budgeting needed to ensure quality half hour presentations. With Clarence Hudson of 20th Century Fox supervising production, "Family Theater" premiered on February 13, 1947; hosted by James Stewart who ushered "Flight from Home" with Loretta Young and Don Ameche with the show's invocation: *More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.* Its practical application was demonstrated as thousands of listeners opened wallets and checkbooks. A dream was fulfilled and a broadcast phenomenon was enshrined.

Two weeks later, on February 27th Crosby made his "Family Theater" debut in "J. Smith and Wife" written in 1938 by Charles Tazewell, author of "The Small One." In a few weeks time Crosby would narrate this story for Decca records. This review appeared in *Variety* on March 5, 1947.

> *Bing Crosby went straight Friday night on Mutual's Family Theater in a warm captivating dramatic vignette tabbed 'J. Smith and Wife' with Irene Dunne playing opposite him. The story of a married couple (who die in a boat sinking) outside the gates of the Elysian fields was full of tenderness and beauty key to the thematic purpose of the Family series.*

Following this ethereal fable, Crosby served as host for seven episodes of "Family Theater," from 1947 to 1956. A set pattern was followed. After the instrumental theme and an introduction, usually by announcer Tony LaFrano, the host would say a few words, typified by those said by Crosby on the August 8th, 1947 broadcast of "Windbag."

> *What America needs most today is the strengthening of the bonds of family life. The greatest contribution we as parents can give to our country is that of raising our family and our children to be God respecting, God loving and prayer-ful citizens. During the past twenty six weeks men and women in the screen and radio industries here in Hollywood have felt it a privilege and an honor*

to enter your homes each week to express these simple and fundamental truths in which we believe. We're of the opinion and we believe most conscientious people are of the same opinion that there is no better and surer way to preserve our national life than those traditions in which this nation was founded and to stand in the humble recognition that there is a God and there is a God to whom we should pray, a God who can and will answer our prayers. We hope that you and your family, that all families, will learn the truth of these words: The family that prays together stays together.

Then the original story would commence, and after its conclusion the host would say a benediction, or what radio hucksters named *a plug for prayer.*

Parallel to his association with The Christopher movement, Crosby's link to "Family Theater" endured for years. It extended into film with the short *The Road to Peace*. Directed by Larry Webb, most of it was shot in 16mm at the College of St. Rose in Albany, New York. 20th Century Fox donated its equipment. It co-starred Ann Blyth. The two stars appear to be on set filming *Top O' the Morning* and sing a duet of "When Irish Eyes are Smiling" and provide narration detailing mankind's need for prayer to attain harmony in a tempestuous post war world. Fr. Peyton also appears in this effort, intended for church screenings. The film did enjoy a brief theatrical 35mm release.

Bing and Ann Blyth film their segment for *The Road to Peace.*

Another short film *Crusade for Prayer* was shown in 1952 with the same cast. In 1963 Crosby narrated "The Promise," a chronicle of the Nativity. Fr. Peyton, with Frankie Avalon, provides bookend commentary. "The Promise" became a Christmas television tradition.

In addition to Crosby a galaxy of stars such as Ronald Reagan, Ray Milland, Cary Grant, Spencer Tracy, Charlton Heston, Frank Sinatra, Bob Crosby, Bob Hope, Jimmy Durante, Maureen O'Hara, and Grace Kelly lent their voices to Fr. Peyton's call for peace. Today Family Theater Productions carries the crusade around the world. The number of endangered souls rescued and personal conflicts settled by this ministry is incalculable. But this much can be said in Father Peyton's centennial year. A candidate for sainthood, with the dedication of selfless friends, revealed that miracles can – and do – happen. Father Peyton's goal lives on. *A world at prayer is a world at peace.*

Here is a complete list of Bing Crosby's involvement with "Family Theater" radio broadcasts. Except for the initial entry, his role was that of host.

"J. Smith and Wife" February 27, 1947. Introduced by Dana Andrews. With Bing Crosby and Irene Dunne. Written by Charles Tazewell. Directed by Richard Sanville. Musical direction by Meredith Wilson. It was repeated on September 18, 1957

"The Windbag" August 14, 1947 with Harold Peary and Bea Benaderet.

"Action Was Limited" August 13, 1952 with Ted deCorsia

"Foreign Exchange" December 2, 1953 with Lamont Johnson and Jeanne Bates

"The Losers" April 28, 1954 with Dan O'Herlihy (Crosby's rival for the best actor Academy Award that year for his role in *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*.)

"Deadbeat" May 11, 1955 with Paul Picerni and Marjorie Bennett

"The Seventh Son" March 7, 1956 with Ricardo Montalban

"Wally" June 13, 1956 with Alan Reed

Fr. Peyton's Family Rosary Crusade acquired a musical setting with "The Joyful Hour," also on Mutual. His powers of persuasion worked on James C. Petrillo, head of the American Federation of Musicians, whose assistance was critical. Bing Crosby participated in the following programs:

1) **December 20, 1947** with Dick Haymes, Perry Como, Ann Blyth and Dennis Day.

2) **December 19, 1948** with Ethel Barrymore, Dennis Day, Maureen O'Sullivan and Perry Como.

3) **December 18, 1949** with Ann Blyth, Licia Albanese and McDonald Carey.

4) **December, 1950** " How Christmas First Came to The World" with Jeff Chandler, Jeanne Crain, The Crosby Boys, Bobby Driscol, Mona Freeman, Ruth Hussey, Rita Johnson, Roddy McDowall, Ricardo Montalban, Dean Stockwell, Anna Maria Alberghetti, Vic Damone, and Anne Jamison. Crosby sings "Adeste

Fidelis."

5) **December 23, 1951** with Ann Blyth, Pat O'Brien, Jimmy Durante and Lanny Ross.

Crosby also appeared on the following broadcasts on behalf or Fr. Peyton:

May 11, 1947 Has a short spot in the Family Rosary Crusade radio program 'The World's Greatest Mother' on the Mutual Network.

March 28, 1948 Bing, together with many other stars, takes part in *The Triumphant Hour*, a program of the Family Rosary Crusade broadcast on the Mutual Network for Easter.

April 9, 1950 *The Triumphant Hour* with Ann Blyth, Mona Freeman, Jimmy Durante.

November 21, 1954 *The Thanksgiving Hour*, a radio program broadcast over the Mutual Network, features a story called 'Miss Clara' and Bing takes part together with Ethel Barrymore, Pat O'Brien and Perry Como.

Note: "And Here's Bing" by Lionel Pairpoint provided much of the information contained in the lists above. David Goodrich, archivist for Family Theater Productions, generously assisted with my research and provided the accompanying photographs.

For more information please visit www.familytheater.org

A Peace Advocate of a Different Color

On April 4 Paul Horn, a jazz virtuoso noted for his mastery of reed instruments, was in New York to perform with Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr at a Radio City Music Hall benefit for The David Lynch Foundation, dedicated to "consciousness - based education and world peace." Paul was one of the first American artists to practice Transcendental Meditation as practiced by the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. In the late sixties he joined The Beatles as they traveled to India to study with the legendary guru. His mother was singer Frances Sper, Irving Berlin's piano accompanist in the early thirties.

I contacted him prior to his arrival in town to discuss his association with Loulie Jean Norman of Jud Conlon's Rhythmaires. She was featured on his landmark LP, "Jazz Suite on The Mass Texts." During our conversation he was asked if he ever worked with Bing Crosby. There was a vague memory of a recording session in the early sixties when he was part of an orchestra backing Crosby on two Christmas selections. He just couldn't remember the titles of the tracks. Once he mentioned that he had worked often with Ralph Carmichael's orchestra at the time of this session, it was evident that they had to be *Christmas Dinner Country Style* and *Do You Hear What I Hear*. On the latter song, originally written by Regney and Shayne as a call for peace in response to the Cuban Missile Crisis, Paul's distinctive flute passages can be heard interweaving the inspirational choruses. Could Loulie Jean, another Carmichael fixture, be the featured female vocalist on *Christmas Dinner Country Style*? Perhaps Paul could shed some light on that at some future date. Coincidentally Ralph Carmichael participated in a tribute to Paul Horn in Arizona on April 11.

Paul didn't have the recordings so they were delivered to him prior to the Music Hall concert. Also provided was a video clip of particular interest: a performance by sitar master Ravi Shankar on *The Hollywood Palace* of September 5, 1967, with an earnest introduction by Crosby. These items prompted from Paul a most gracious thank-you note.

> *The clip of Ravi Shankar was a surprise. Crosby must have been one of the first to present him to the American audience. The recordings were a good reminder of what a fine singer Crosby was. Effortless and with a simple beautiful voice and an inviting easy manner.*
>
> **Martin McQuade**

JUST HURD IN HOLLYWOOD—
Bing Crosby Gives Unconvincing Imitation of Bing Crosby
THE GIRL'S GOT YOUR NUMBER
BING CROSBY
LIKE ALL THE OTHER MOVIE STARS IN HOLLYWOOD-BING HAS TO HAVE A PRIVATE TELEPHONE NUMBER. FOR IF HIS NAME WERE LISTED IN THE BOOK-TOURISTS-PRACTICAL JOKERS-ETC. WOULD PESTER HIM DAY AND NIGHT.
TEE HEE! IS THIS MISTER CROSBY? OH-HULLO-BING TEE HEE-ETC.
BUT IT SEEMS THAT IN HOLLYWOOD EVEN PRIVATE NUMBERS RAPIDLY BECOME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE. SO AS SOON AS TOO MANY PEOPLE ARE WISE TO A STARS NUMBER-HE CHANGES TO A NEW ONE. AND THIS HAPPENS REGULARLY EVERY COUPLE OF MONTHS.
NOW JUST RECENTLY-BING GOT A NEW NUMBER. AND A DAY OR SO AFTER THAT HE HAD OCCASION TO PHONE HIS HOME FROM THE STUDIO
→
BUT THO' HE TRIED HIS DARNEDEST-HE COULDN'T THINK OF THE NEW NUMBER. SO HE CALLED THE CHIEF OPERATOR -
WOULD YOU PLEASE GIVE ME BING CROSBY'S NUMBER?
I'M SORRY SIR-BUT WE'RE NOT ALLOWED TO GIVE OUT PRIVATE NUMBERS LIKE THAT
BUT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! I'M BING CROSBY-IT'S JUST THAT I'VE FORGOTTEN MY NEW NUMBER!
OH YEAH! WISE GUY-WELL IF YOU'RE CROSBY LETS HEAR YOU SING SOMETHING
SHE'S AS GOOD AS CONVINCED RIGHT NOW - THOUGHT BING TO HIMSELF AS HE WAFTED A FEW BARS OF MELODY OVER THE WIRES IN HIS CHARACTERISTIC STYLE!
BUT FAMILIAR AS THE CROONING CROSBY'S VOICE IS TO MOST OF THE U.S.-IT FAILED TO GET BING HIS TELEPHONE NUMBER BECAUSE IT DIDN'T CONVINCE THE OPERATOR. SHE LISTENED A MOMENT AND THEN HUNG UP AFTER THIS PARTING RETORT—
BOY! ARE YOU LOUSY!
JUST HURD

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Gord Atkinson, 14 Castle Harbour Crt., Ottawa, ON K2S 1B9, Canada.

Gord's *The Crosby Years* series remains available direct from him. US members can obtain the CDs for $16.00 US each which includes postage. With the strengthening of the Canadian currency against the US dollar, Canadian purchasers should now pay CAN $16.00 for each CD. Payment can be made by check or money order to Gord Atkinson. Please note that USA members may send US dollar checks.

UK, Irish and European members who wish to obtain the CDs should contact Malcolm Macfarlane. The CDs cost £10 each.

Maureen Carpenter, Brighton, East Sussex, UK (Tel: 01273 673315)

Maureen is the widow of our long-time member Tony Carpenter and she has been in contact to request help with passing on Tony's collection. She does not want any money for it but wishes it to go to another enthusiastic Bing collector, as Tony would have wished. She will be happy to pass the collection on but requests that it must be collected. Contact Maureen direct please.

Michael Crampton, address on inside front cover.

Michael has many spare copies of old issues of BING magazine and please contact him if you would like to pick some up for a nominal figure. Also, there are still some copies left of the excellent book covering Bing's TV appearances and Michael is offering these at the hugely discounted price of only £9.99.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com – website: www.fesfilms.com/)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your NTSC requirements for Bing on DVD and video.

Mike Kaptanis, 64 Kingsley Drive, Yonkers, NY 10710, USA (Tel: 914-779-9728, email: mmgkaptan@aol.com)

The following 78's for auction to highest bidder. Auction ends one month after you receive this issue of BING.

Victor scroll VI 22618 I Surrender, Dear new -

Col. 1851 I Kiss Your Hand, Madame / Baby, Where Can You Be? new -

Col 1629 My Suppressed Desire / Rhythm King E+ (scr 2nd side)

Col. 2001 Can't We Be Friends / Gay Love N/N-

Italian Col 3474 Splenore (Shine) / L'ultima Ronda (The Last Round Up) new

Eng. Parl. 331 Let's Fall In Love E+ (orig. sleeve)

Lucky 1023 We're A Couple of Soldiers / Once In A Blue Moon E/V+

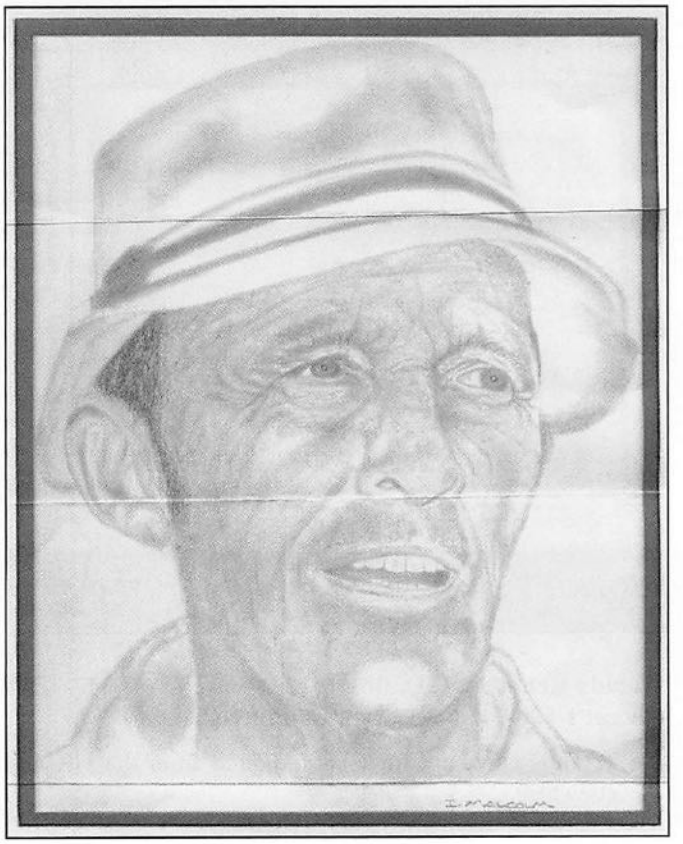
Lucky 60481 Temptation / Good Night Sweetheart E/E+

Dub. Bing- Jingle Bells / A Blues Serenade (Bing Blow Up) E+

Ian Malcolm, Janel, Maitland St., Leven, Fife KY8 4RE, UK (Phone: 01333 426558)

"Please find enclosed a drawing I did of Bing some 33 years ago. I think I would be calling this one "The Final Round?" The drawing original is A4 size. I managed to get his autograph when he appeared in Edinburgh (see ticket). I am now in my 70s and intend to sell said piece. If you know of anyone who would be interested, you could maybe get them to contact me. I am open to offers."

(Editor: Ian sent a photocopy of his drawing which we reproduce below. It had been folded in the post so please ignore the crease marks.)



The Record Centre, 43, Presthope Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4NJ, UK (Tel: 0121-476-9619, e-mail: Raypurslow@blueyonder.co.uk)

Mail Order only. Ray Purslow has always been a real supporter of the Crosby cause and for your Bing CDs, contact Ray.

David Vaughan, 52, Savoy Close, Harborne, Birmingham, B32 2JA, UK (phone: 0121-682-9097,
email: dtv67@yahoo.co.uk)

"Last July, my father, John Thomas Vaughan, passed away. He was seventy-eight, and had been a huge fan of Mr. Crosby since his twenties, and was a member of your society for several years, receiving several copies of your magazine and calendars. My mother and I would be

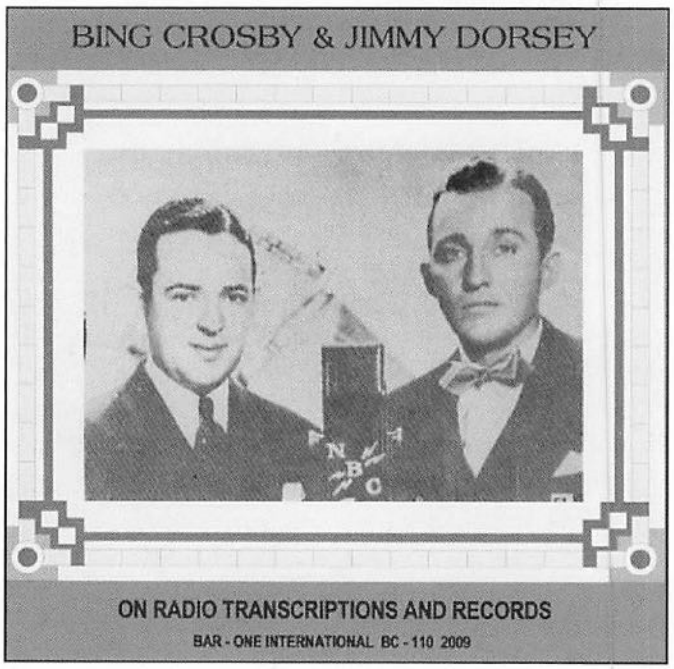
interested to find a fellow Crosby fan in our area who would like any of my father's Crosby related items.

As well as copies of your magazines, my father collected several CDs and cassette tapes. He also bought at the time of Mr. Crosby's death two magazines, one British, one an American import, both tributes published in 1977.

My mother and I are not interested in selling; only passing the items on to a fellow Crosby fan. Please contact me using my email, by letter or by phone."

Barry Whittingham, 25c Garton Close, Cinderhill, Nottingham NG6 8RZ, UK
(email: barry.whittingham@ntlworld.com)

Barry has prepared an interesting CD called "Bing Crosby & Jimmy Dorsey" which has 23 tracks from the Kraft Music Hall of 1936/7 on which Bing is accompanied by the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra. The remaining 6 tracks are commercial recordings including the unissued "A Door Will Open" from 1945. Cost is £7:00 including postage in the UK, for Europe £8:00 and for the USA £8:50.



Worlds Records, P. O. Box 1922, Novato CA 94947, USA (phone: 1-800-742-6663) www.worldsrecords.com/

Try this company for CDs imported from the UK and elsewhere.

****

Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,

Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 426 Park Place Drive, Petaluma, California 94954-6647, USA (tel. [707] 762-5570 - e-mail bingsfriends81@sbcglobal.net. Regular newsletters are issued.

The Australian Bing Crosby Society

Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria 3130, Australia. (tel. [03] 9877 1983)

Regular newsletters are issued. Film nights are scheduled to be held on August 5, October 7 and December 2 this year.

Internet sites:

www.BingCrosby.com

This site comes under the Bing Crosby Enterprises banner and contains rare photos of Bing, radio shows, recordings and great clips from Bing's films.

Bing Crosby Internet Museum:

www.mcckc.edu/~crosby

A wonderful site which carries up-to-date news and has a lively discussion board. Not to be missed by those on the net.

A Bing Crosby Discography

Set up and maintained by our member, J. Richard Baker (known as Jarbie), this site can be found at:

http://www.jazzdiscography.com/Artists/Crosby/crosby.html

The Immortal Talents of Bing Crosby

http://www.geocities.com/crissi_n/bing.html

This is a most impressive web site maintained by our member, Crissi Newton. Well worth a look.

OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, e-mail: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Nat King Cole International Fan Club, c/o Roy Holmes, 18 Rutland Drive, Morden, Surrey SM4 5QH, UK (phone: 020-8648-8858, web page:

http://www.highstreets.co.uk/kcc/index.shtml)

King Cole Comments is the club's newsletter and this is issued three times each year. For a free copy, please send an SAE to Roy Holmes.

Friends of Doris Day, c/o Dr. Sue Gökgör, 71 East Avenue, Oxford OX4 1XR, UK. eMail: suegokgor@aol.com

Started in 1997, The Friends of Doris Day is an International Doris Day appreciation club based in Oxford, UK - and the only Doris Day fan club in the UK. The club publishes three 32 page magazines a year, packed full of articles and information you won't find anywhere else, including memorabilia signed by Doris herself for auction or sale. Subscription is £16 for UK members, £21 (or equivalent in Euro or US$) for Europe, £22 (or equivalent in US$) for other countries.

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Justin Clarke, 21 Main Rd., Wetley Rocks, Stoke-On-Trent, ST9 0BH, UK (phone: 01782 551103).

Dick Haymes Society, c/o Roger L. Dooner, 2951 Tyler St., NE Minneapolis, MN 55418, USA, or Maurice Dunn, 16 Cradley Park Road, Netherton, Dudley West Midlands, DY2 9SR, UK

(web site: http://www.dickhaymes.com/dhsociety/index.html)

International Al Jolson Society, c/o John Wehrman, 1195 Hickory Hill Drive, Green Bay, WI 54304, USA (e-mail: JWWehrman@aol.com - web site: http://www.jolson.org

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com ,

website: http://homepages.tesco.net/flias/)

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs. Pat Harvey, National Secretary, 11 Mossbank Avenue, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 4UN, UK (tel: 01543-317743).

A bi-monthly magazine called *Perfectly Frank* is issued. Fees within the United Kingdom are £15 a year; £19 for European membership and £23 for the USA. Web page: http://sinatramusicsociety.googlepages.com/

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418). Meetings take place at 8:00 pm, second Monday of every month, The Montrose Hotel, Donnybrook, Dublin 4.

International Andy Williams Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 5, Westerham, Kent TN16 1UE, UK

The club has been running since 1967 and membership costs £6.50 (UK), £7.50 (Europe) and $15 (USA). A quarterly newsletter is issued.

Books 'n' Bing

1. Perry Como - A Biography and Complete Career Record

by Malcolm Macfarlane and Ken Crossland. Published by McFarland & Co, June 2009. Hardcover, 310pp. List price. $55. ISBN 978-0-7864-3701-6

The book has a foreword by Michael Feinstein, 17 chapters, 73 photos, a discography, TV listing, chronology, bibliography and an index. Ken and your Editor are very proud of this and we feel that it is the definitive story of Perry's career. Bing crops up frequently as you would expect. A review will appear in our next issue.

The book is available on the Internet from www.mcfarlandpub.com/ or from Amazon. Telephone orders can be placed on 800-253-2187 or the book can be ordered by post from:
McFarland
Box611
Jefferson NC 28640, USA

2. High Society: Grace Kelly and Hollywood

by Donald Spoto, Hardback, 236pp, Hutchinson, £18.99, ISBN: 9780091796396

This new book has received generally poor reviews but the appraisal by Christopher Silvester in the Daily Telegraph of June 12 contained a surprising comment:

Of her performance in the musical *High Society*, in which her character, Tracy Lord, is more sung about than singing, Spoto says that she sang *True Love*, her duet with Bing Crosby, "with touching wistfulness – not in a full-throated, overconfident mezzo" and notes that it sold a million copies. But what Spoto doesn't know – nor, for that matter, do Kelly's previous biographers – is that her voice was dubbed by Niki Schenck, the 17-year-old daughter of Nick Schenck, the boss of MGM's parent company.

This is something we've never seen stated before and we wonder if it's true! In the book *Grace* by Robert Lacey published in 1994, the author says:

Grace had been taking singing lessons since the moment she was offered the part in the summer of 1955. She had one spoof song to sing off-key, and one to sing properly - "True Love," a guileless and syrupy ballad that she was due to perform with Bing Crosby. It was a matter of pride for Grace that she should deliver her own song in her own voice, and when (Johnny) Green disagreed, she took her case to the very top. She went to see Dore Schary.

"I lost," Green remembered ruefully. MGM did not hire a voice double, and Grace sang "True Love" beautifully.

The quote by Johnny Green, one of the film's musical supervisors, originally comes from the James Spada book *Grace: The Secret Lives of a Princess* published in 1988.

In *BING*, the authorised biography by Charles Thompson, Bing is quoted as saying:

"I had a great deal of trouble with the studio. They didn't want her to sing on the record; they thought it should have a better voice. Of course, I was determined to have Grace on a record that I thought

had a chance to be a gold one and we had quite a squabble about it."

Grace Kelly is then quoted too.

"I found it quite a worrying experience to be recording with a big orchestra, but Bing made me feel very relaxed and helped me through. He has a very deep voice and my voice is rather thin and high, and it was a problem for this recording. I was supposed to sing the melody, but there was too much difference in our voices and I finally had to sing the harmony instead."

Bing ought to remember with whom he sang the song, so who are we to believe? We have tried unsuccessfully to contact Mr. Silvester in an attempt to discover his source for the contention. I'll bet Ms Schenck did a demo for the film which was not ultimately used because Bing got his own way. *(Editor: see page 49)*

"You're Not A Flop, Dad!"

Karen Graff of Floral Park, New York spotted a very interesting article by Lindsay Crosby. We can't identify the magazine but the article undoubtedly dates from 1959 as it was in response to an interview with Bing when he called himself a flop as a father.

I don't know how our dad could feel he's failed us as a father. Reading that he had said that in an interview really shook me up. I only hope some day that I can give my son a tenth of what Dad has given us. And that I can rate any part of the admiration we've always felt for him.

That's why it hurt so much to see him knocking himself in print. Taking himself apart and saying he punished us too much, that he was too strict with us, that he made us work too hard, that he spent too little time with us. That really shook me up.

Dad never believes he's done anything well. Today, he still knocks himself as an actor and as a singer most of the time. I think he's The King, but he's always sure he could have done a better job—which is always more than a little hard for me to see.

And when Dad takes himself to task for failing us, I can't go along with him at all. He's given us too much. The way I see it, the best performance he ever gave didn't win him an Academy Award. It was the months he kept the act going and held our family together when Mom was dying.

Dad carried the weight of knowing this all alone. We didn't know anything about it until right at the last. He never let Mom know he knew, and Mom never let Dad know she was on. And I'll never forget how they used to kid back and forth all the time. And when our father says he couldn't ever find the right words to say to us, I'll never forget how gently he broke this to us. Steadying our world the best way he could to keep half of it from crumbling apart. Not telling us all at once even then, but just gently preparing us for the day Mom died.

And I can't understand why Dad worries whether or not he gave us enough of his time. It was typical of him to give up everything to stick close to us that first year after Mom died. My brothers went back to college and Dad took me to Palm Springs right away, and he kept me busy all the time. He played golf with me every day. I had always been interested in art, and so Dad talked me into taking up painting again. He decided we'd go to Europe and he had me take French lessons so I'd be able to know the people and the country better over there. At the time, Dad said he wanted to get away, and he could tape his radio show abroad just as well-but I knew later that he planned the whole trip to give me a change of scenery, and make things easier for me.

We had an apartment in Paris, and Dad kept me busy to the point where I never had a minute to get depressed or moody or anything. I helped him tape 20 radio shows, and when we weren't working, we went sight-seeing together everywhere. We toured the art museums, and we spent a lot of time near the Seine looking at the artists, and sitting in the sidewalk cafes and little bistros watching the people pass, and talking to them. We had a wonderful time together over there. We went to Germany and then to Spain, where we took in all the fiestas and the bullfights and just about everything.

It's aches and pains for Dad to get out in public too, because of people recognizing him everywhere he goes, but he wanted to keep me busy every minute.

And when we went home four months later and walked back into the house in Holmby Hills, I knew Dad had gone to Europe for one reason: to keep me away until time could help me come back to a home without Mom there. When my brothers got out of school we left again and all vacationed together. Dad gave up just about everything else that year; he wouldn't leave us alone at all. We found out he turned down two or three big pictures, and he kept the radio show mostly just to keep me busy.

But then Dad always did give us more time and companionship than most parents I can think of who weren't half as busy as he was. Dad taught me how to play golf and he must have spent a hundred hours with me out on the driving range when he could have been on the golf course having fun. And after I got to playing a little bit, he'd take me on when he could have been playing with somebody a lot nearer his handicap. We had a fathers-and-sons baseball deal too, made up of our friends and Dad's, and we used to have some heated games. We split our summers between vacationing at Hayden Lake, Idaho, and working on the Nevada ranch, and Dad always refused commitments that would keep him away from us. My brothers and I worked part of the summer to make our own vacation money, but I don't know why Dad worries now about any of us ever being over-worked. We always loved our summers at the ranch. Dad had the supervisory details well under control. His room was upstairs and his blue eagle eye didn't miss a thing. We used to kiddingly call him "The Eye," and there were times when I'd swear his cornea must have had a telescopic lens. He always knew if one of us sneaked out, and he'd be sure to fox us and lock the doors. I became an authority on how to raise windows quietly, but this didn't accomplish much of anything either. Dad would always be sitting in the dark living room of our hacienda with a flashlight in hand, waiting like the gateman at a guided missile base to check us back in.

Bing and the boys at Hayden Lake. Lindsay is on the far right of the picture

At the time, I couldn't see the wisdom in all this. You think your parents are being old-fashioned and all that jazz, but I can appreciate it now. Dad and Mom wouldn't tolerate us turning into pampered, spoiled Hollywood brats, and I'm glad they brought us up the way they did. If they'd spoiled us, it would have been a lot rougher on all of us in the long run.

However, in my opinion, we were never over-disciplined. True, Dad was no spare-the-rod-and-spoil-the-son-guy, but we didn't get a spanking either by hand or by belt any more than most any other kid. And as far as I can recall, not one of us was ever spanked after grammar school.

I wasn't even spanked for one thing I did that really hurt Dad—and I sure had one coming then. I was about 11, I guess, and I got caught cheating on a test in school. I didn't feel like studying the night before, and I'd written some little things out. All the other kids were doing it, mostly by way of acting smart and putting something over on the teacher. But I wasn't too hip and I fumbled and I didn't get away with it. If you were caught you had to go see the principal and you got an automatic "F." As I remember. Dad punished me by cutting off my allowance for a couple of weeks. But the hurt look on Dad's face after the principal called him and he inquired of me, "Lindsay, is this true?" — was worse than that. Believe me, I never tried any short-cuts again. We had, of course, quite a few little man-to-man talks straight along as I was growing up. Particularly if my brothers or I stayed out too late or didn't think to call home when we were supposed to. By that time we'd discovered girls, and the most effective disciplining was grounding us just when somebody was giving a big bash we wanted to attend.

But whenever we were involved in a more serious situation, from the beginning Dad was always there, ready to weigh the facts and to understand. "What's the story?" Dad always asked, and the jury was still out until he'd heard our side first. Dad's always known, more than anybody else, how the Crosby name can magnify just about any situation out of all proportion to the truth, and he's always reserved judgment until he's heard what we had to say.

Like when I was involved in a traffic accident a few months ago and made the papers taking a swing at a photographer. It was written up like I'd had too many drinks, but this was not true. The photographer came from nowhere while I was talking to the authorities, and I begged him to wait until everything was over and then I'd do anything he wanted me to do. But while we were talking I saw the flash-bulb go off and in a split-second before I could think, I swung.

It was the first time anything like this had happened to me, and I felt terrible about it. I thought about the name and the headlines coming up, and I knew how Dad would be hurt by it, and I was a little scared. It's that way with all of us whenever anything hits the papers. But it's Dad you think of more than the name. You're his kid . . . you know he's going to be hurt by it ... and you feel so ashamed of it even when you're not entirely in the wrong.

Dad was away fishing when this happened, but he called me the next morning long distance and asked for the whole story. And when I told him, Dad understood. "If you need any help—if I can do anything—be sure to tell me," he said.

Because of all the publicity involved, our lawyers finally felt it would be better not to fight my case. And I know Dad felt doubly bad—because he knew how terrible I felt about the whole thing. He as much as said he was sorry we couldn't fight it because of the name, because if we had been anybody else we could have gone into court and fought it and probably won.

But we're not anybody else. And I can see now what Dad was aiming at when we were growing up, when we used to think he was being too strict with us and over-cautious about everything. Dad was always cautioning us then never to start a fight, and to avoid one whenever possible. He was always telling us not to pay any attention to anybody who tried to bug us about the name or about money or anything like that. Dad always said if we could just hold back and keep trying—eventually we could win them over that way.

We've tried to do this, harder than anybody knows. We're no lilies, my brothers and I. We're just as red-blooded as the next one, and I don't say we're always right. But for all the publicity about us, we've ducked a lot more fights than we've accepted, and we've walked away from trouble more times than anybody would believe. We never want to hurt our dad, and it hurts us a lot whenever events work the other way.

When we were kids, our parents never spoiled us by lavishing too much money on us. I'm sure some people think of us today as "those rich Crosby kids" with bank books wide open all the time. But this is untrue. We haven't even touched a large part of our money like the inheritance we got from Mom, or in my case the money I got for the 42 radio shows I did with Dad. This has been invested and set up in a fund, and we'll never see it except just gradually, a little at a time. We can't touch it unless our attorney okays it, and we're living on what we're making now. With all the entertaining you need to do when you're in show business, plus paying house rent, and all the other bills, I still live on $350 a month now. When we were growing up we each had a dollar a week allowance. We did bits in Dad's movies and on his radio shows and Dad paid us like pros, but the money was always put away and invested for us. Dad wanted us to get to know the value of money and the importance of earning your own way, but I don't recall any of us being over-worked. During the haying season we'd work on the ranch, riding the buck-rake or whatever and make maybe eight or nine dollars a day. And Dad was strict about not letting us switch jobs in mid-field if we got tired of what we were doing. "No, you'll stick to the job you have," he'd say. "You can try something else—next year." I don't know why Dad feels he's failed us in not being able to communicate with us. None of us feel that way about it. Of course we haven't always agreed or convinced one another about what we were trying to say, but I've always felt free to talk to him.

Maybe we haven't always communicated enough emotionally. It isn't too easy for us Crosbys to really show what we feel. This applies to Dad too. Looking back now I can't recall seeing him really get emotional or break down his outward reserve except twice in my life. When Mom died was one time, and when (in our opinion) Dad should have gotten the Oscar for his performance in *The Country Girl*.

Lindsay and Bing

We were all for our dad remarrying, and out of his love for us Dad had made sure how we would feel about it beforehand. I was the only one home when Dad and Kathy first started to think of getting married, and Dad and I had a long talk about it one day. He said he thought they would get married, and he wanted to know how I felt about Kathy, and he asked what the other boys' feelings were too. I told him we all liked her, and our only thought was for his happiness, which was true. We knew Dad had been lonely since Mom died, and we wanted him to be happy again. But it made us feel good in turn that Dad's thought was for us and how we would feel about it. I was sorry Dad was unhappy when I moved out of the house a few months before I was 21. But my feeling was that Dad and Kathy should have a chance to build their own new life together without having any grown huskies like us around. And I felt it was time for us to build lives of our own too.

I don't know how our father could feel he ever failed us in any way. I can't think of a father who's given his sons more. I don't mean materially—I mean our exposure to Dad's own sense of values. His deep regard

for religion, his sincerity, his humility, his respect for hard work, and the way Dad's always stressed the importance of having a purpose in life.

"I want you to do something I can be proud of—something you can be proud of," Dad used to say. "Not just as Bing Crosby's kids—but as yourselves. I want you to have some goal that's worthwhile."

Dad never tried to influence us in that goal. At one time I wanted to be a pro baseball player, at another an artist, when I was 14 I was very serious about wanting to become a priest, and I always thought show business was pretty fascinating stuff if I could ever qualify. Dad's concern was to give us the foundation at home and the college education that would equip us for whatever we decided to do.

I'm sure Dad's been disappointed because none of us finished college. Ever since I can remember our father has stressed the importance of an education, and I wish one of us could have given him that sheepskin. We will before we're through, but it won't be the Ivy League kind.

Dad was hurt and disappointed that I quit Williams College so soon without giving it a chance. "The best thing is to either go back there—or go into the Army," he said. And I said, "I'll go into the Army."

I didn't know what good it would do me going into the Army then, but I just felt I could probably find myself there. I knew if I went back to Williams in the long run it would hurt Dad a lot more. I might be able to prolong it over the years—possibly even get a degree—but I couldn't see anything worthwhile coming from it, feeling that way.

It was probably the biggest decision I ever made, because I knew how much it hurt Dad. This was the first time I ever argued with my father really. The first time I ever actually stood on something I believed —and knew Dad didn't. But I felt I had to do it.

And this is the kind of guy my Dad is. As hurt and disappointed as he was in me, two weeks after I went into the Army, Dad called me at camp and said, "I hope you know what you're doing. I hope you do a good job. And I'm sorry if I was wrong."

I don't know whether Dad knows how much this meant to me. And I don't know who was right and who was wrong. That's for the future to say. Certainly if I was wrong I'll have nobody to blame but me. Dad has given me every opportunity.

Dad's given us the greatest goal in the world. People are always asking me, "How is it, being Bing Crosby's son?" It's how it is when you're trying to make a touchdown against a champion football team. If you can just get to that goal line, you know you've got it made. And you know it's going to be hard as Hades to make it, because you're bucking the greatest team in the world on the other side. But you're going to fight one yard at a time and some way you'll get there.

Not that we expect to ever come anywhere near our old man. Who could? But he's given us the incentive to try. Before he knew what we'd be doing in life. Dad always told us, "Whatever you do—just do the best you can. Whether your name is Crosby or Joe Blow—you can't do more than that."

We're all working very hard now, rehearsing an act we're going to take out on tour. We have bookings throughout the United States and Europe, including two weeks at the London Palladium at a very fancy sum. We're taking our own orchestra and some units and it will be a great experience for all of us.

Caption: (l to r) Dennis, Lindsay and Phillip – The Crosby Brothers.

As a solo, Gary's already got it made. He's finishing his third picture at 20th Century-Fox, *A Private's Affair.* He pioneered the way for the rest of us, he's taken the brunt of everything and we owe him a lot. Dennis has been spinning records for ABC. Phil has twelve taco stands going for him on the side. And it's up to me to prove now that I have what it takes. I'm starting my first movie, *Hound Dog Man*, for Jerry Wald at 20th Century-Fox, and I'm trying hard to do everyone proud.

I hope Dad will have reason to be proud of us. I don't think Dad should feel he's failed us as a father. And I'm prayin' we'll prove just how much of a father he's been . . . and how much it means to us not to fail him.

Lindsay Crosby

A couple of Bing sightings or soundings from the New World.

Bob Achorn spotted a couple of interesting mentions of Bing in his newspapers.

In Washington, the United States opened its vast

new underground Visitors' Centre at the U.S. Capitol. It cost the taxpayers something more than $600 million. It is intended to give Congress protection from tourists who used to wander through the Capitol prior to the 9/11 attacks in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington. Visitors are now closely checked to sidetrack terrorists or other trouble-makers. Moreover, visitors who get in can be entertained underground.

Robert Campbell, architectural critic for The Boston Globe, examined the new center and mentioned a number of its attractions. As he walked by one exhibit, he heard the voice of Bing Crosby, singing "Any Bonds Today?" The song was written by Irving Berlin in 1941 to promote the U. S. Treasury's sale of so-called Defense Bonds. After Pearl Harbor, he quickly rewrote it to urge Americans to buy War bonds.

Campbell identified Crosby as a "radio crooner," which seems an unduly modest assessment of Bing's career and his World War II impact. In any case, in public spaces Americans may now encounter Bing's voice singing not one but two Irving Berlin numbers, "Any Bonds Today?" and "White Christmas," a shopping mall favorite written in 1938 or 1939 and first heard on screen in "Holiday Inn" (1942.)

After 30 years at Pebble Beach, California, the Bing Crosby Pro-Am Golf Tournament changed names following Bing's death in 1977. Negotiations to retain his name apparently fell through, and the corporate sponsor's name quickly replaced Bing's.

It was an unhappy moment for many Crosby fans, whether or not they were golfers. Bing had been so active in the process, moving his old, smaller tournament north in 1947, helping to line up "celebrity" amateurs, even building a Crosby mansion overlooking the 13th green. He kept the tournament but sold the house after less than three years, supposedly to please his wife, Dixie. She preferred Holmby Hills.

The four-day tournament was at first broadcast on radio, then soon seen on the new hot medium, television. Bing's cronies, to the extent that he recognized any, clustered around him. Good fellowship flowed. He permitted his presumed pal, Phil Harris, former bandleader and gruff-voiced singer ("That's What I Like About the South") to take over some of the festivities.

Yet Bing was himself was very much on hand, playing competitively in the early years and providing delightful commentary when his best golfing days were history. His fans could watch him "live" on television (which was untypical, given his affection for tape.) At Pebble Beach he was everywhere. He chatted easily with players and honestly described good and poor golf shots in his colorful style. Occasionally, he did a bit of informal entertaining at the 19th hole-with and without Bob Hope.

Suddenly, it was over. The gala 30 years of what Bing called the Crosby Clambake—or sometimes the Crosby Fish-fry—seemed forgotten.

Happily, there has been in recent years a growing recollection of Bing, at least for television purposes. His name has been spoken on the air from time to time, and his voice has been heard singing a couple of lines from "Straight Down the Middle."

In this year's Pebble Beach telecast, the principal network anchor, Jim Nantz, talked warmly of Bing's role in moving his pro-am to that beautiful spot on the Pacific Coast and making it a prize stop on the professional tour. The network even flashed on the screen a black and white picture of Bing, for the benefit of watchers that didn't know who Nantz was talking about.

It was all a far cry from the sprightly putting green exchanges and the raucous clubhouse celebrations of the old days. But it was something, even though the Crosby name remains exiled from the title of the major event he launched and led to fabulous success.

BING CROSBY AND TALACHE

Graham Pascoe sent us an article by Nancy Renk in an unidentified magazine and we have taken some extracts from it.

In the late 1940's thru the early 60's, Lake Pend Oreille was known for its trophy rainbow trout called Kamloops. In the forties some people bought the old mining town of Talache in Idaho and the surrounding mining claims. The mine owners turned the summer home into a restaurant and the houses in the old town site into cabins for fisherman. They had boats to rent and a guide boat. People came from all over to catch these huge fish. The lodge burned down in the early 60's and just the rock chimneys are left standing. The government has fooled around with the level of the lake and the feed for the big fish have nearly disappeared so the fish are much smaller these days.

In 1993, I interviewed Harlan and Margaret Walker, the owners, and this is a story about Bing and his visits to Talache.

Harlan and Margaret went on to say:

"The Crosby's were from Spokane and at that time they had a home down at Hayden Lake. Bing never did stay over night. He would only come up for a day of fishing. He would spend the whole day. He would be there early in the morning. He would be out there in the kitchen helping to get breakfast. One morning I was cooking breakfast and he was waiting tables."

Nancy Renk

(Editor: How typical of Bing to 'muck in". Not many Hollywood stars would have done that.)

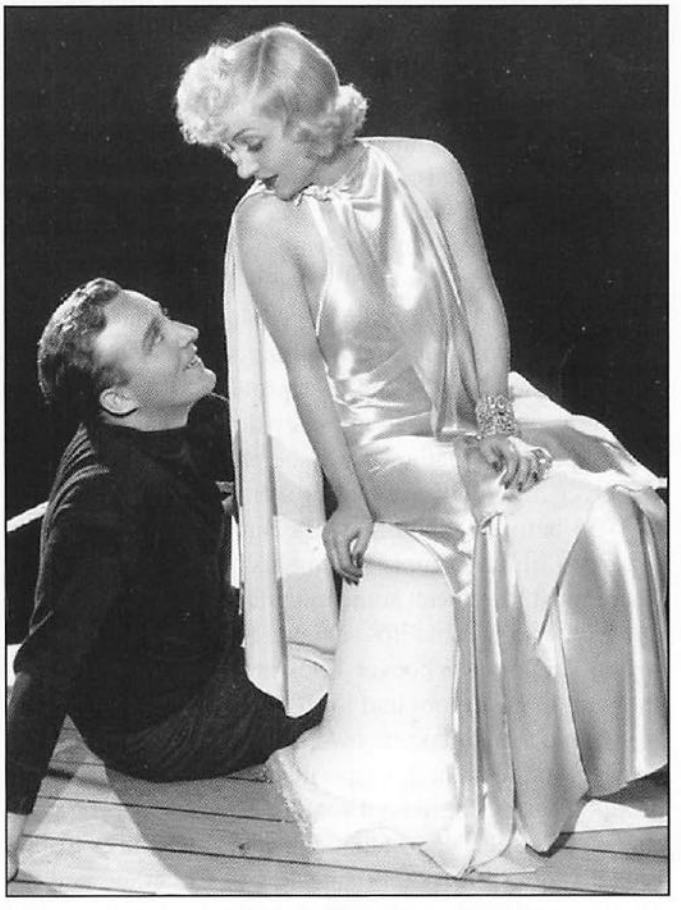
Celluloid Crosby

By the end of 1933 Bing had firmly established himself as a best selling recording artist. In February of the following year a poll held by a New York newspaper resulted in him topping the popular male singer category. Also by the end of 1933 he had conquered radio through regular broadcasts sponsored by Cremo Cigars, Chesterfield Cigarettes and Woodbury Soap. In addition, he had played record breaking seasons with a record breaking salary at the New York Paramount. As 1934 began he must have known it was the year he would make the big time in movies. And so it was to be. By the end of that year he made his first appearance in the list of top ten box-office stars. He was placed seventh. By the end of 1934 he could confidently add "filmstar" to his c.v.

Up until 1934 he had been seen on screen in eighteen different productions. Six of these were Mack Sennett shorts. Four were feature films in which he exhibited his singing skills by making guest appearances with or without the Rhythm Boys. Of those that remained, all but three were short subjects. Those three features were released in the twelve months beginning October, 1932. In *The Big Broadcast* (1932) he played himself. When he was signed to Paramount Pictures he made two films released in 1933 which were lightweight in content but contained some good songs. The films were *College Humor* and *Too Much Harmony.* It was two days before the Christmas of 1933 that a film was released that was worthy of his combined singing and acting talents. That was *Going Hollywood.* But the one that made the picture going public realise that Bing Crosby was here to stay was *We're Not Dressing.* Nor was it solely cinemagoers that responded to Bing's increasing filmic appeal. W.E. Oliver, the reviewer for the Los Angeles Evening Examiner noted:

> "The man who is entitled to the Academy's statue for the greatest improvement in acting - if there were one - continues to bear out my prognostication of being the big male box-office bet for 1934. He is Bing Crosby...who brings his latest cinematic effort to Grauman's United Artists' screen next Tuesday in *We're Not Dressing*." (14th April 1934)

Filmed during February and March of 1934 this was a Paramount film with a big picture budget and good production values as evidenced by the location shooting on Catalina Island. It was based on the popular book "The Admirable Crichton" by J.M. Barrie, a property already owned by Paramount. It also started Ray Milland on his Hollywood career. The cast was further strengthened by Ethel Merman who was enjoying major success on the Broadway stage in the Cole Porter musical "Anything Goes". Plus Burns and Allen who were then making the transition from vaudeville to films and radio. But the main indication that his third contracted Paramount production was to signal Bing's entry into that studio's top league of contract players was the casting of his leading lady. Paramount offered the part of Doris Worthington to Miriam Hopkins. She had been seen in a couple of films that impressed the studio, the public and the critics. They were *Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *Trouble in Paradise*, both released in 1932. For some reason Hopkins decided to postpone her film debut with Bing for three months until *She Loves Me Not* went before the cameras in May of 1934. That left the door open for Carole Lombard to star opposite Bing. She was midway through filming *Bolero* when Paramount decided she was right for a major role. The part she was playing in *Bolero* had also been turned down by Miriam Hopkins. At the time Lombard was assigned to *We're Not Dressing* she was but a hair's breadth from achieving a placement on Hollywood's "A" list of female leads.



Carole Lombard woos Bing

Her screen career began in silents under her real name of Jane Alice Peters. She was twelve in 1921 when she appeared in *A Perfect Crime.* Fox signed her

as Carol Lombard in 1925. It wasn't until 1930 that she styled herself Carole. By then she had experienced a career move similar to Bing - she signed with Mack Sennett. During 1927 and 1928 she appeared in more than a dozen Sennett two-reelers. When she took on more substantial roles in feature films she progressed from routine parts to scene stealing performances. Prior to Paramount using her in *We're Not Dressing* she had been seen in *No Man of Her Own* and *The Eagle and the Hawk* (both 1932). It was immediately after her Crosby film that she was recognised as a top ranking light comedy star following her performance in *Twentieth Century* (1934). At the time she began work on *We're Not Dressing* she was showing early signs of the acting style that would make her the leading screwball comedy actress of the 1930s.

Once Lombard's *Bolero* commitment was ended she flew to Catalina Island for two week's location shooting. There are stories of fun and games on and off set. Lombard was already establishing a reputation for practical jokes and salty language. My favourite story about the location work on *We're Not Dressing* involves her coming down to breakfast one morning and enquiring loudly, "Bing, dear, did I leave my nightie in your room last night?" She was indirectly responsible for Bing abandoning any attempt to pin back his ears with spirit gum when appearing on screen. Part of the *We're Not Dressing* location shoot required Bing to carry Lombard ashore from the sea. He lost his footing on a slippery rock and both were plunged into the water. This loosened the adhesive on his left ear. He never bothered to stick back his ear and the on screen sequence features it both flattened and as nature intended.

On the film's release it was recognised that the success of *We're Not Dressing* was mostly down to Bing's presence. The Hollywood Citizen News said, "*We're Not Dressing* depends almost wholly upon Crosby, his five songs and such nonsensical comedy as the other members of the cast provide." A touch over generous, perhaps, but more evidence that Bing was becoming a cinematic force to be reckoned with.

Over in the UK we had to wait until the November of 1934 before we could assess Bing's emerging ability to carry a film by simply having his name above the title. There must have been some uncertainty about *We're Not Dressing* being able to achieve tickets sales without strong support. Whoever booked the film for its first showing in Liverpool had limited confidence in the film being able to stand on its own two feet. When it opened on Merseyside at the Liverpool Paramount cinema it was propped up by the added feature *Success at any Price* starring Douglas Fairbanks Jnr. and Genevieve Tobin. Plus a stage show comprising Peggy Cochrane and the 16 Halliwell Girls performing rhythmic dancing. And just in case, Karino and Vadeo and Herbs in the playlet "An Episode of the East". Not forgetting "the eyes and ears of the world" in the form of the Paramount newsreel.

And as always, any film worth seeing once was worth re-booking. So seven years later *We're Not Dressing* was twinned with *Virginia* starring Madeleine Carroll at the Manchester Odeon Cinema Oxford Road. In those pre-television days the economic life of a film was as long as audiences were willing to buy a ticket. It wasn't until a little over thirty years later that UK viewers had a chance to revive their memories or see the film for the first time when it appeared on BBC television. Radio Times drew it to our attention with a fair summary of the delights in store when it called it "easy-going and infectiously daft escapism." Which we need more than ever in 2009.

Keith Parkinson

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

TUTTLE, FRANK (1892-1963) Director. Frank Tuttle directed half a dozen Bing films beginning with *The Big Broadcast* (1932). That was followed in quick succession by *Here is my Heart* (1935), *Two for Tonight* (1935), *Waikiki Wedding* (1937), *Doctor Rhythm* (1938) and *Paris Honeymoon* (1939). That working relationship with Bing in the 1930s must have had an influence on the Crosby acting style. In 1945 Bing employed him as director on the Crosby produced *The Great John L.* At that time Tuttle would have been unaware that the demand for his directorial services was set to diminish because of his communist party membership. He made one film in France in 1950 with only four more pictures following in the 1950s before his career expired.

Bing feels that Frank Tuttle is getting too realistic in his demonstration of how he wants the love scene played.

TWENTIETH CENTURY-FOX Hollywood film studio. Fox released two 'Bing Crosby Productions' towards the end of Bing's acting career: *Say One For Me* (1959) and *High Time* (1960), and whilst they had him on the lot they gave him a celebrity bit in *Let's Make Love* (1960). That studio also employed him for his acting swansong, *Stagecoach*, released in 1966. Fox had distributed some short films in which Bing appeared when he was under contract to Paramount for his feature film appearances, but when Paramount lost his services in the mid-1950s it was Twentieth Century-Fox that realised there was still box-office clout in the Crosby name. The studio came into being in 1935 as the result of a merger between the long established Fox company and the recently formed Twentieth Century. During the war years they released some glorious Technicolor musicals whilst the other studios stuck to monochrome. In the 1950s they tried to combat the threat of television by releasing their films in CinemaScope, a format which television was incapable of matching. When Richard Murdoch acquired the studio as part of the News International group he saw a working relationship with television as a means of ensuring the ongoing profitability of Twentieth Century-Fox. Although the studio avoided a name change it is very much a part of the 21st century's entertainment scene.

TWO FOR TONIGHT Film. Paramount acquired the rights to an unproduced play by Max Lief involving an impoverished family with one of three half brothers having ambitions to be a songwriter. George Marion, jr. and Jane Storm worked it up as a Crosby vehicle with Harry Ruskin providing additional dialogue. It was Ruskin who provided most of the dialogue for Universal's *King of Jazz* a few years earlier. *Two for Tonight* was shot during June and July of 1935 and received its New York premiere at the end of August. Of course, Bing was cast as the ambitious composer. In the film he discovers that he is making overtures to a deaf song publisher. Salvation comes from the sky when a plane piloted by leading lady Joan Bennett lands in a tree occupied by a vocalising Crosby. By way of recompense Miss Bennett arranges for Bing to write a play to be staged by her producer. The unimaginative Crosby writes about his encounter with Bennett and the play (and film) achieves a happy ending because it includes a romance with the lady. Mack Gordon and Harry Revel wrote five songs for the film: "Two for Tonight", "Takes Two to Make a Bargain", "From the Top of Your Head", "I Wish I Were Aladdin" and "Without a Word of Warning". All this in a major feature film with a running time of one hour and one minute. Frank Tuttle directed after Lewis Milestone and Leo McCarey both declined - possibly after they read the script. 'Variety', the showbusiness bible, didn't think much of the end product. That paper's review read: "No wow...the songs, the fetching title, the competent cast and mostly Crosby will have to offset the other deficiencies." The film took a year to travel from North America to the British Isles. The journey must have done it good because the usually caustic Graham Greene liked what he had seen and told the readers of 'The Spectator', "a very well written and amusing entertainment." Sandwiched between *Mississippi* and *Anything Goes*, *Two for Tonight* did the business for Paramount, which was no surprise to the studio whose books showed Bing had been their biggest box-office draw since the previous year.

TWO FOR TONIGHT Song. The Mack Gordon-Harry Revel title song from the 1935 movie. Bing sings it over the film's credit titles and it becomes the title of the musical play he writes.

TWO PLUS FOURS Short film. This one reeler released by RKO-Pathe in 1930 provided an opportunity to glimpse Bing and the Rhythm Boys in a programme filler "starring" Nat Carr and Thelma Hill. The Rhythm Boys are augmented by other members of the cast for the song "The Stein Song", which tops and tails the film. A Crosby film which can only appeal to completist viewers.

UNITED ARTISTS Production, releasing and distribution company. U-A was not a studio, more a facilitator for movie talent. It was the company selected to release the Bing Crosby Production's *The Great John L.* and *Abie's Irish Rose* in the mid-1940s. The company was founded in 1919 by Charles Chaplin, D.W. Griffith, Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks. It was logical that Fairbanks released *Reaching for the Moon* (1930) through U-A. Other United Artists distributed films with a Crosby connection are the 1942 short *Don't Hook Now*, the Bob Hope comedy *Alias Jesse James* (1959) and the last Hope and Crosby *Road* picture, *Hong Kong*, in 1962. The company had its fair share of financial difficulties. Its main advantage was that it did not carry the burden of studio overheads but when location shooting became the trend this apparent benefit was eroded. United Artists also attracted product which could be termed difficult in entertainment terms. Its biggest setback was the $40 million catastrophe *Heavens Gate* (1980). Only the distribution of the James Bond and Rocky series of films allowed its continued survival.

UNIVERSAL Film studio. Universal was the company that gave the world the first glimpse of Bing Crosby when it produced and distributed *King of Jazz* (1930). Ten years later the company distributed two Crosby features made outside Bing's Paramount contract: *East Side of Heaven* (1939) and *If I Had My Way* (1940). Sandwiched between those two films was the golfing short *Swing with Bing* (1940), made for Universal. The studio was founded in 1912. In 1946 there was a merger with International Pictures, resulting

in Universal International. The company became a subsidiary of MCA (Music Corporation of America) in 1962. MCA also controlled Decca Records. U-I was the first Hollywood studio that realised that television was the future and from the mid-1950s began to turn out programming intended for home consumption.

URECAL, MINERVA (1894-1966) Character actress. In *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945) it is Minerva Urecal, playing the part of a housekeeper, who greets Bing on his arrival at the run down parish of St. Mary's. For most of her career on film she was given a few lines in subsidiary roles. It was only when she was cast in the television series "Tugboat Annie" that she gained a part that ran to more than one page of dialogue.

VAGABOND KING, THE When I saw *Bing Presents Oreste* in 1957, I regarded it as a rather long trailer. *The Vagabond King* (1956) was playing at the local village cinema the following week and Bing was doing his best to persuade us to see Oreste Kirkop attempting to be the next Mario Lanza. He was billed simply as Oreste and played the part of French medieval poet and rebel Francois Villon. It was obvious that Paramount had severe doubts about the appeal of Oreste and asked Bing to do them a favour by plugging the singer in an extended "coming shortly" screen filler. Even Bing's support could not prevent Oreste's early retirement after *The Vagabond King* bombed.

VAN HEUSEN, JAMES [Edward Chester Babcock] (1913-1990) Composer. Jimmy Van Heusen was part of Bing's Hollywood musical career from 1941 until 1964. Or, if you prefer, from "It's Always You" in *Road to Zanzibar* to "Don't Be a Do-badder" in *Robin and The 7 Hoods.* He collaborated with Johnny Burke until the latter retired and then wrote music for an equally gifted wordsmith in Sammy Cahn. The full Crosby related work is as follows:

- *Road to Zanzibar* (1941) It's Always You; You Lucky People You; African Etude
- *Don't Hook Now* (1942 short film) Tomorrow's My Lucky Day
- *Road to Morocco* (1942) Road to Morocco; Ain't Got a Dime to My Name; Moonlight Becomes You
- *Dixie* (1943) Sunday, Monday or Always; She's from Missouri; A Horse That Knows the Way Back Home; If You Please
- *Going My Way* (1944) The Day After Forever; Going My Way; Swinging on a Star
- *Here Come the WAVES* (1944) Moonlight Becomes You
- *Duffy's Tavern* (1945) Swinging on a Star [parody]
- *Road to Utopia* (1946) Sunday, Monday or Always; Goodtime Charlie; It's Anybody's Spring; Welcome to My Dreams; Put It There Pal
- *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945) Aren't You Glad You're You
- *Welcome Stranger* (1947) Smile Right Back at The Sun; Country Style; My Heart is a Hobo; As Long as I'm Dreaming
- *Variety Girl* (1947) Harmony
- *Road to Rio* (1948) Apalachicola, FLA; But Beautiful; You Don't Have to Know The Language
- *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1949) If You Stub Your Toe on The Moon; Once and for Always; Busy Doin' Nothing
- *Top o' the Morning* (1949) Top o' The Morning; You're in Love with Someone
- *Riding High* (1950) Sure Thing; Someplace on Anywhere Road; Sunshine Cake; The Horse Told Me
- *Mr. Music* (1950) And You'll be Home; High on The List; Wouldn't it be Funny; Accidents Will Happen; Wasn't I There; Life Is So Peculiar
- *You Can Change The World* (1951 short film) Early American
- *Road to Bali* (1953) Chicago Style; Hoot Mon; To See You Is to Love You; The Merry-go-run-around
- *Little Boy Lost* (1953) A Propos de Rien; Cela M'est Egal; The Magic Window

All the foregoing with lyrics by Johnny Burke. From hereon Sammy Cahn is Van Heusen's collaborator.

- *Anything Goes* (1956) Ya Gotta Give The People Hoke; A Second-hand Turban and a Crystal Ball
- *Say One for Me* (1959) Say One for Me; I Couldn't Care Less; The Secret of Christmas
- *High Time* (1960) The Second Time Around
- *Let's Make Love* (1960) Incurably Romantic
- *The Road to Hong Kong* (1962) Teamwork; Road to Hong Kong; Let's Not Be Sensible
- *Robin and the 7 Hoods* (1964) Style; Mister Booze; Don't Be a Do-badder

When Van Heusen teamed with Cahn he produced more hit material for Frank Sinatra than he did for Bing Crosby. "Love and Marriage", "The Tender Trap", "High Hopes" and "My Kind of Town" became Sinatra standards. After 1964 the kind of films for which Van Heusen had been hired were no longer being made and his career in Hollywood ended around the time Bing called it quits with the movies.

Keith Parkinson

Dolores Hope's 100th Birthday

May 27th was not just another day in Toluca Lake, California. It was the 100th birthday of perhaps the town's oldest living, longtime resident - Dolores Hope.

When I asked her how she was enjoying this celebration of her life she coyly responded, "I'm thinking about it." But what interested her most was the promise of a tape I'd made for her consisting of songs from each decade of her life. "When do I get it?" she said.

A singer, humanitarian and wife of comedian Bob Hope, most people don't know her own story — how the

Harlem born Dolores DeFina became Dolores Reade and then Dolores Hope. But it has everything to do with music.

Growing up in a musical family, Dolores was often called upon to sing by neighbors and family. In her first church play she sang, "Alice Blue Gown," and realized she was hooked.

A summer job as a model turned into an opportunity for a screen test and later she became a singer in the road show company of "Honeymoon Lane," understudying Kate Smith. In Philadelphia while rooming with Ginger Meehan (later to become Mrs. Johnny Mercer) Dolores met Bing Crosby who was then dating Ginger.

A few years later Dolores was singing at the Club Richman in New York with George Olsen and his Band when she caught the attention of newspaper columnist Walter Winchell who penned: "Dolores DeFina is the female Crosby." One day Bing came to the club with his new bride Dixie Lee, and after the show Dolores told him Winchell's quote. Bing's reply? "Thanks for the plug."

Despite the show business whirl surrounding her at that time, Dolores was scared stiff on the stage but was getting good reviews and soon moved over to The Vogue Club on East 57th Street.

In late 1933, George Murphy and his wife were invited to the club to hear Dolores and in turn invited Bob Hope, his co-star in the Broadway hit, "Roberta," to join them. Dolores sang "It's Only a Paper Moon," and as Murphy put it, "Bob couldn't take his eyes off Dolores." Bob later said it was "love at first song."

An early photo of Mr. & Mrs. Hope

It was the beginning of a short courtship and a long marriage during which time Dolores raised a family, entertained the troops, served as a founder of the Eisenhower Medical Center, became Honorary Mayor of Palm Desert, finally returning to her roots in her eighties when she recorded the 1st of four albums.

To celebrate her mother's 100 years, daughter Linda thought of decorating the Hope estate using 11 kiosks, each representing the decades of Dolores's life. A team of us went to work in March to design and decorate the free-standing 7 feet tall kiosks with photos chosen from family archives by son Kelly, and pictures from the 1900s to present day. As Music Consultant I chose songs from each decade that had special meaning for Mrs. Hope which played through speakers mounted inside the cubicles. Actors dressed in period costumes as well as vintage cars graced the backyard of the sprawling estate.

Among the 200 attendees were Ann Blyth, Kathryn Crosby, Mary Frances Crosby and husband Mark Brodka, Robert Osborne, Phyllis Diller, writer Larry Gelbart and wife Pat, and Gloria Stuart who turns 99 on July 4th.

After the cake was cut, congratulatory letters read, 100 balloons released, and dozens of press and photographers slowly drifted away in the early twilight, Dolores Hope's mellow-toned recordings could be heard over the intimate crowd of remaining guests.

The Birthday Girl was still chatting with old friends and I caught a wink as she said, "I thought this was going to be just another birthday."

Maureen Solomon

The Crosbys: In their own way, they're a great team.

Ron Field sent us this article from the Australian Women's Weekly of September 24, 1975. It looks to have been written in early in 1975 and follows on nicely from the article by Lindsay Crosby earlier in this issue.

In the spring of 1957 Harry Lillis Crosby, then a widower of five years, wrote the following letter to a 23-year-old actress-journalist named Kathryn Grant:

Dearest Kathryn:

I guess this will be my last letter to you. Since you won't see me, I do feel I should tell you what I want to say. I want to marry you. Any time, any place you wish. I really feel the proposal deserves a personal response, and as I'm supposed to return to the Springs tomorrow, won't you please call me this evening or in the morning. That's the very last thing I'll ask of you.

Love, Bing.

Kathryn called.

Today Bing Crosby and his second family live, in a graceful white brick mansion in the old and plush San Francisco suburb of Hillsborough. I was invited there on a recent winter morning for breakfast. Early - which is when the Crosbys eat breakfast.

I was to spend several days with the Crosby clan. The kids, Kathryn told me, would be home from school to film their annual Minute Maid commercial, so the time seemed right.

She missed only one detail. The commercial was to be filmed in Visalia, 250 miles away, and when I arrived. I found there wasn't room for me on the plane. While Kathryn struggled with this problem, I met the Crosby family: Mary Frances, a pretty, pert 15-year-old, eating a hasty breakfast in the kitchen. Harry, a year older, looking much like a youthful Bing, flip and relaxed, joking with the driver. Nathaniel, 13, rushing down the stairs at the last minute, still buttoning and zippering, acknowledging a hasty introduction.

And Bing, lounging in the front hall, was watching all the frenetic activity but slightly removed from it. At 70, after surgery he barely survived last year, he looks good. Only the lines in his face and the rather frail frame indicate either age or illness; the big ears, the soulful eyes and the easy amiability are all intact.

He was concerned about my problem and said so; but it wasn't *his* problem. Kathryn had got us into it, and she'd have to get us out. As she does with most household problems Kathryn turned this one over to the Crosby butler, Alan Fisher, and left us on the portico watching their limousine drive off.

Alan Fisher was once footman to the Duke of Windsor, and was captured by Kathryn Crosby when Bing made one of his last films, in England, a decade ago.

A little uneasy

Fisher runs the Crosby household like a tight ship. Kathryn leans on him; Bing will always be a little uneasy about him.

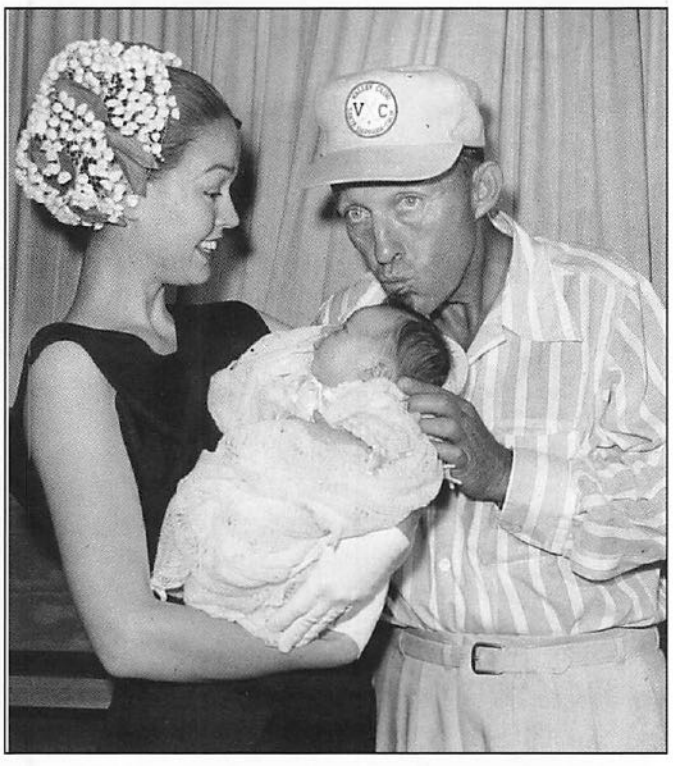
Bing's retreat is upstairs, an office cluttered with books. There's a large picture of Bing with the four sons of his first marriage to Dixie Lee, and a heavy emphasis on sports — several golfing plaques and a cup from the 1965 Irish Derby, won by Bing's horse Meadow Court. Twin dressing rooms (Bing's is crowned by more than two dozen hats, mounted like fishing trophies) flank a spacious master bedroom, dominated by a huge double bed.

The children's rooms in the opposite wing reflect their current interests. Harry's is stuffed with guitars, hunting rifles and mounted marlin; Nathaniel's with autographed footballs and baseballs; and Mary Frances' with living things — a pair of turtles she picked up in a ditch in Mexico and a special breed of parakeet.

"All of the kids are loners — and very self-sufficient," Fisher told me. "They like their privacy. Harry is the most social; I guess you could call him the playboy of the family. Nathaniel has the temperament of his father, right down the line, and Mary is her mother, with a kind of scatterbrained loveliness."

Bing Crosby reacted instantly to Kathryn Grant's loveliness the first time they met, in 1954. She had left Houston to sign a contract with Paramount Pictures while she finished her college education in Los Angeles. Once she got her degree, she gave up acting and took a job as a Hollywood correspondent for a chain of Texas newspapers. One of her first assignments was to interview Bing, who promptly asked her out to dinner. Three years later they were married.

Kathryn returned to part-time acting while she bore three children, became a registered nurse, and acquired accreditation in California as a schoolteacher. She has worked on-and-off at all these things, but the theatre has remained her abiding passion. When Bing moved his new family from Beverly Hills to Hillsborough in 1964, because "it always seemed to me a beautiful place to live and raise children," Kathryn was able to join the superb American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco. She divides her time now between ACT productions and a television interview show she conducts each morning on a San Francisco station.



The arrival of Harry Jr in 1958.

So while Bing tapers off work, Kathryn pursues it

voraciously. "Bing never minded my working after we were married, even though he teased me about acting classes, because to him performing is as natural as breathing. Now acting has become a part of the rhythm of *my* life. One day I will do a Broadway play."

Meanwhile, she enjoys her husband and her children whenever and however she can. Hillsborough is home now, and the Crosbys are accepted there without fuss.

The family regimen is Spartan, since Bing is a chronic early riser and Kathryn has to be up at 6.30 to get to her TV show. So the family eats breakfast and dinner together each day they are all at home. Says Kathryn: "We're a close-contact family. I think that physical closeness is very important. We kiss a lot, and the boys kiss their father. That didn't happen in Bing's early life, and he's made a big effort to make it easy and natural for our children. Bing's family was not demonstrative, and he's very shy about showing affection."

Work long hours

When he wants to withdraw, Bing can, and does, either within his own skin or one of the other Crosby homes — in the Sierra Mountains of California or the Baja peninsula of Mexico. His right to do this is no more questioned than is Kathryn's right to work long hours at her activities or the children's, to pursue their own interests. From all this emerges a fascinating combination of individualism combined with a tight — sometimes rigid — set of disciplinary standards that are found in few American homes these days.

But all that was to become clear only after long conversations in Visalia. When I finally arrived in mid-afternoon, the family was on location in an orange grove. There was plenty of time to talk — it required two days to make a 60-second commercial —and only Bing turned out to be difficult to explore. He's a very private man who can say — with some justification — that "all the questions have already been asked; what more is there to say?" But if the questions have been asked, not many answers have been given. Where other stars are endlessly on record with their private views, Bing has guarded his own zealously. Politics, for example.

"I don't like to associate myself with political figures," he told me. "What does the average actor know about politics, anyhow? It's a private thing. I think the only public move I ever made in a political sense was when I went to a dinner for Shirley Temple Black; but that's only because I've known her a long time and thought she was qualified for the job she was seeking. But basically I don't think an actor should use what influence he has to get somebody to vote for a candidate."

With Shirley Temple in 1967.

Bing's causes follow his primary interests—the outdoors and the environment. He talks with enthusiasm about a new organization called the American League of Anglers, set up to support environmental and anti-pollution bills to save fishing streams and control the amounts of fish that can be taken. "There's a big difference," he says, "between political and social causes."

He also talks easily about his work and the glory days at Paramount, which go back over 40 years. He was then a member of a group called the Rhythm Boys, singing with the Paul Whiteman band. They had come to Hollywood to do a movie, "The King of Jazz." Paramount discovered Bing, signed him for "The Big Broadcast of 1932," and he's been at it ever since.

"I go back to Paramount to do TV shows occasionally," he says, "and I always look up the people I knew, although most of them are gone now. It was a great business then, a family. It was hard work for a lot of people, but for me it was laughs, fun."

There was a time in those early days when Bing's reputation for drinking and high living was awesome. Some of the residue carried over to his first marriage to a rising young actress named Dixie Lee, but she is generally credited with stabilizing his life. She died in 1952. The four boys from the marriage — Gary, twins Phillip and Dennis, and Lindsay - have endured a good many of the problems seemingly endemic to children of movie stars. Now in their 30s and early 40s, only Gary has chosen to follow his father into the entertainment field. He's a moderately successful actor, appearing regularly on television. All of the boys live in the Los Angeles area and see their father both in Hillsborough and when Bing and Kathryn visit Southern California.

They have produced a dozen grandchildren, several of whom are older than Bing's children by his second marriage.

In looking to the past, Bing would rather discuss his work, about which he is remarkably objective and a little wistful. "I get a lot of letters that make me feel there still must be an audience for my pictures and my records — and that's nice to hear. Although I had a great time, I never felt I that I did anything of importance in the way of a performance - especially when I look at the great actors, people like Olivier, and Tracy, and Gable, and Jack Lemmon. I'd like to have done some of the things they did, but I never had the ability, the talent."

When I pointed out the critically acclaimed dramatic work he'd done in "Stagecoach" and "Country Girl." among other films, he said matter-of-factly, "Sometimes a director can trick you into doing things you thought you couldn't do. But in the dramatic parts I've done, I mostly just imitated somebody else I had seen. I never thought it was acting; the moment I would finish a line. I'd walk off the set, and it didn't mean a thing to me. The only thing I've always had that is really valuable is a helluva good ear for music. I learn quickly, have a good sense of tone — things I was lucky enough to be born with. I can really pick out a melody and render it - and I'm proud of that. I'm not a great singer, but I can sing in tune, I sing intelligently, and I think I can sing jazz as well as anybody. As an actor I pretty well played everything as the same guy."

A dramatic scene from *Stagecoach*.

He feels that his voice has come back totally from last year's surgery, and his new record album, along with his work on two TV specials since his operation, certainly bears him out. "My range," he says, as if he were talking about someone else, "is pretty good, and that's partly because I've started to practise a lot. That was one thing I never did much, but I discovered that throat muscles are like any other muscles—if you don't use them, they get stiff."

He finds himself more comfortable with new trends in music than in films. "A lot of rock is monotonous," he says, "built around the same chords, the same harmonies. So it's like the blues, which is just an old form of rhythm and rock. "But the detachment disappears when Bing contemplates motion pictures.

"There are few films I can take the children to," he says. "They know everything, but it's still embarrassing for me to sit there with my daughter and see the kind of thing they're making now. The San Francisco papers have two pages of advertising for pornographic films almost every day. What the hell kind of climate is that in which to raise a child?"

Kids have no respect

"I guess I'm old-fashioned." he said, "too sentimental, but I always worry about accountability. If I say or do something, who is it going to affect? Is it going to hurt somebody, break something that someone treasures? To me the family is a treasure, the only real basis for a solid society. Good families govern the attitudes and behavior of the community — and the community is the guts of the nation. When you take away family life — and marriage certainly means family — I think you've knocked an awful deep chink in the protective armor of society. That's why permissiveness worries me so much, and I really think the entertainment industry is largely responsible for it. So many of our kids are growing up today with no respect, no sense of accountability for what they do or what they say."

Discipline is tight in the Crosby household, and if the kids resent it, they manage to hide their feelings extremely well. Although religion has always been an accepted part of their life, each of them is coming to grips with the church on his own terms. "We are," says Kathryn, "fighting the battle of the ritualized, formal religion." Mary Frances explained: "Some priests preach and some communicate. We've found a church that is involved with what's going on nowadays."

It's typical of the Crosby approach that the children are required to attend church but not to think in rote patterns. Social ground rules are similarly well established — and similarly challenged. For example, there had been a mild flap a few weeks earlier when Mary Frances attended a local high-school dance that didn't end until 12.30. The inflexible Crosby curfew is midnight, and when Mary presented her case for an exception, she was turned down. By Bing.

There was something of a scene that renewed the next evening while Mary was waiting for her date to arrive. This time she got mildly hysterical, ran through

the "don't you trust me?" argument and was almost grounded altogether. Recalls Kathryn: "I said in my own nice, psychological way, 'One more word and you can't go at all' - and that was it."

Mary was in at midnight, and the next morning she came to her parents' bedroom and said: "I'm sorry I hassled you. If there's going to be a hassle, I'd much rather it be about something important."

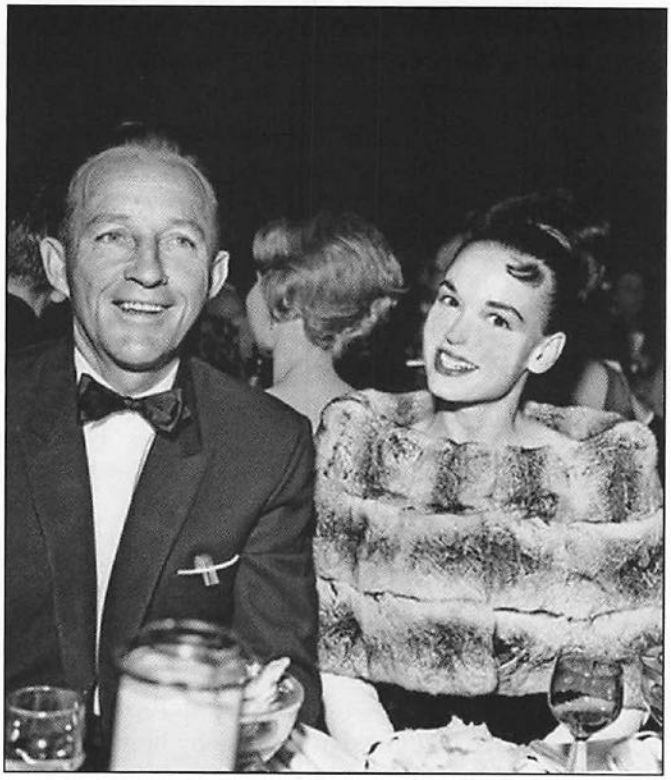
The Crosbys say they are united on discipline. Bing calls it a "joint effort," and Kathryn says, "Although we don't really disagree, I think there is some difference in approach. But Bing and I never crossed one another, and as long as parents are together, I don't think it matters who is right or wrong in a given instance."

The children have apparently thrived on this treatment. Although they are very different, they express some common qualities — respect, politeness, enthusiasm. Harry, at 16 the eldest of Bing's second family, is his father's hunting and fishing companion and shares Bing's love of the outdoors. But Harry's passion — and probably his lifework — is music. He clowns a lot, is usually the first with a wisecrack and appears loose and relaxed in his approach to his own goals.

Not so Mary Frances. At 15, she knows precisely what she wants and pursues it with a singleness of purpose that tends to brush aside both obstacles and digression. Mary Frances is Bing's only daughter, the sixth of his seven children. She has a Dresden-like prettiness, but her energy, animation, and spontaneity are decidedly un-Dresden. She has accelerated her school work so she will graduate from high school this spring, a year ahead of her class. Mary Frances, who wants desperately to be an actress, spends many hours every week on singing and dancing instructions. ("I love the ballet. It's fantastic mental discipline, and it keeps you in great physical condition.") She has recently joined a ballet company and is often rehearsing late into the evening. But that, says Mary Frances, is typical of the Crosby household. "We all understand each other," she says, "and we've been taught to be independent. My parents don't fuss over us."

Nathaniel, the youngest, starts high school next year. He's quiet, does his own thing, and tends to be cool about it. He's an excellent golfer, is presently learning to fly, and has recently — according to his sister — "discovered girls." His temperament — among all of Bing's children — is probably the closest to that of his father with whom he shares a passionate interest in spectator sports. When Nathaniel wanted to carry that interest to the football field, however, he ran into a determined mother. "I told him," says Kathryn, "that if he wanted broken legs, I'd break them for him. All of Bing's older boys carry scars of football."

Says Kathryn: "We're an old-fashioned, authoritarian, dyed-in-the-wool, do-as-I-say family. Bing is the authority. He says he wants perfect children, and he strives to get them."



Bing and Kathryn out on the town

The Crosby family — which scarcely needs the money — continues to do the Minute Maid commercials because, says Kathryn, "we think it is particularly important for our kids to feel they've at least partly earned their own way." Throughout the long, frequently boring hours on the set in and around Visalia, the Crosbys kept the atmosphere light and breezy. Kathryn probing and prodding, Bing mostly reserved but slipping in an occasional zinger, Mary effervescing, Harry wisecracking, Nathaniel listening.

When it was all over, there was a surprise 41st birthday party awaiting Kathryn back in Hillsborough. The children told Kathryn they were going to take her out to dinner as a birthday gift, and they managed to keep her upstairs until the guests had infiltrated the Crosby music room. It was a good evening.

Tragic accident

Bing doesn't normally sing at parties, but he did at this one - "and that," says Kathryn, "was a very real gift he gave me." It was all there that night — the family gathering, good friends, the open affection, the group singing. Activities out of some dim, forgotten, and romantic past. But things the Crosbys — with all their wealth and fame and years in a tough and often venal business — have somehow managed to keep alive inside their own family.

It has survived some near tragedies as well as some real ones. Five years ago Kathryn's parents were taking the three Crosby children on a brief excursion. There was a confusing detour that emptied unexpectedly into a new freeway, a blur of high-speed traffic, a crash. Kathryn's mother saw the crash coming and wrapped herself around Harry, preventing him from flying through the windshield. Five days later she died of her injuries. The other children, belted in the backseat, were badly battered and had to be dug from the wreckage of the car. But the ambulance driver was later to write to the Crosbys telling them that he had never before seen children handle themselves so well under stress.

They were equally impressive last year when they had to face the possibility of losing their father. He had been sick — an unusual condition for Bing — for some weeks and the doctors couldn't figure out what was wrong. Finally they ordered him to hospital.

Says Kathryn: "When Bing came home after the doctor told him he was going to have to have surgery, he was so beautiful. When he told me, he let me give him a back rub. And he *never* does that."

All the children — from both families — were notified, and they gathered at the Crosby home. "It was a terrifying experience," Mary Frances remembers. "I was living in Mexico (she spent four months in 1973 as an exchange student with a Mexican family), and when they told me to come home, I knew Daddy was terribly sick. It was awful, but you can always get good out of even the worst experiences — and this one brought the family even closer together than before."

The doctors found a growth in Bing's lung, and the surgery to remove it was lengthy and delicate. The whole family feared it was cancer, but the growth turned out to be benign. Although his first months of recuperation are a dim memory of pain and drugs, Bing tends to dismiss it casually. "I've had two or three major operations," he told me, "and this was just another one as far as I was concerned. Not very pleasant, of course, but what can you do about it? Get the best doctor you can and hope for the best. Worrying isn't going to improve anything. The surgery severed some nerves, and it will be quite a while before all the feeling returns. It shortened my backswing in golf and elevated my score a little."

"That," said Kathryn, who was listening, "is for the suckers. He'll get a really good handicap, then take them for everything he can."

There seems a deep affection between these two — understated, often flippant, but substantial. When Kathryn asked me after our first day if I had got together with Bing and I told her I'd had only about five minutes of real talk, she said: "You're lucky. That's more than I've had in weeks." She was only partly teasing. Later, talking about her husband, she said a little wistfully: "Bing takes a lot of long walks. Sometimes he even lets me go along."

That isn't going to change, of course, but in the Crosby family the right of the individual to be himself as long as he isn't hurting anyone else is guarded zealously. Perhaps Mary Frances said it best: "We're very independent, and yet we love each other very much." It's a formula for living that seems to be working well for the Crosbys.

(Editor: And now more than 30 years later, to bring us up-to-date, here's a review by Jane Stoutenborough of Kathryn Crosby's appearance in New York in June.)

My Life with Bing

Kathryn Crosby honors her late husband with song and story.

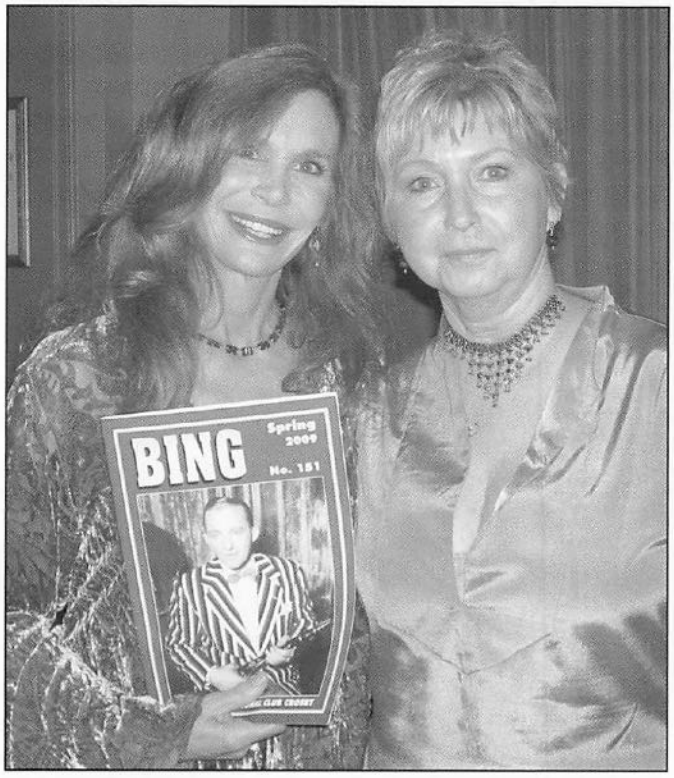
If you have not had the good fortune to spend an evening at Feinstein's at Loews Regency in NY you are missing a wonderful experience. Feinstein's is a contemporary night club paying homage to the classic night clubs of years gone by. The room sets the stage for an entertaining intimate evening experience. And all seats are "good seats."

This was Kathryn Crosby's second engagement at Feinstein's and the room was filled with friends, family and fans. Members of the Facial Pain Association were there to support their spokesperson, Kathryn. There were old friends of Bing and Kathryn's including Ann Slater as well as Joe Franklin. Others including Gary Giddins (our favorite Bing biographer), Ruth Prigozy and Walter Raubicheck (from Hofstra University) were there. Robert S. Bader, VP of Marketing and Production, Bing Crosby Enterprises (BCE) and Judy Schmid and Stew Koenig, from Koenig Advertising Public Relations, (the PR firm representing BCE) were in attendance. Trip Hornick (co-producer of the *The Melody Lingers On*), Mike Hirsh, founder of Whitehall Printing Co. (publisher of Kathryn's last two books about life with Bing) and Joe Yranski, recently retired film historian from Donnell Center and Lincoln Center turned out for Kathryn's performance. Martin McQuade, Pat Kenny and Sally Monaghan, some faithful fans, were there to enjoy the festivities of the evening. Before the show, the Crosby children spent time greeting members of the audience and expressing their appreciation for the love shown their family.

As Feinstein's takes us back to a golden era, Kathryn took us on a journey back to when Bing was king of song and movies. Looking lovely in a jeweled black and lace evening gown, she blended Bing's career milestones with their own personal journey guided by her wit and wisdom. She wove it all together into a colorful and delightful tapestry.

The show opened with Bing's theme song, "Where

the Blue of the Night meets the Gold of the Day" sung by Kathryn with the piano accompaniment of the gifted Edward Sayegh. She reminded us of Bing's work entertaining soldiers of WWII and recounted that Bing had said entertaining the troops was his most memorable time of his career.



Mary Crosby with Jane Stoutenborough (right) and BING magazine!

The small stage, surrounded with video screens, provided the audience with a montage of films and photos ranging from a very young Bing to a more mature Bing, reflecting images of his career and life, included footage from Christmas shows with his three adorable scene stealing children. There's video of Bing singing "Don't Fence Me In" which was his personal theme song during his single days.

Kathryn sang with a sensitive voice as she shared some of Bing's memorable songs. She sang duets with Mr. Sayegh, beginning with "Imagination" and "For Sentimental Reasons" and performed medleys such as "Sunday, Monday and Always" and "It's Been a Long, Long Time."

Kathryn soloed on a number of songs but three in particular stood out. "Blue Skies" and "Second Time Around" were two such songs. The latter was written for her at Bing's request by Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen. Apparently, Bing neglected to share that little bit of information with her, but Mr. Cahn eventually did! "Moonlight Becomes You" was the third song marvelously performed by Kathryn to a photo presentation of Mary Frances with her father, spanning from her as a baby to young woman.

Harry Crosby joined his mother on stage with his guitar and performed "In a Little Spanish Town" and "Gone Fishing." Harry performed both songs with his father when he was a young man, so it was a poignant moment for all of us. And Kathryn recalled Nathaniel for his prowess on a golf course, for which his dad was immensely proud.

To close the show, Kathryn lead the audience in a chorus of "White Christmas" and full with pride as her and Bing's children joined her on stage. It was so reminiscent of the family on stage with Bing many years ago and such a fitting salute to the man we will always cherish.

The family sings "White Christmas" together.

As I close this report, it is obvious that I am very biased. I am a fan, not a critic, and have been a fan of Bing's since I was six years old and became a fan of Kathryn's after she married Bing. This was an evening for fans and friends and an evening fans should not miss.

Jane Stoutenborough

(Editor: What a wonderful evening! Our thanks to Jane for reporting on it. Next comes John Walton and he's reaching for someone and finding them there!)

Anyone Seen Val Doonican?

In 1988, after 24 years as the epitome of Saturday night television entertainment in the UK, Val Doonican disappeared. Val had been proof that genuine singing talent combined with a strong work ethic can transcend the prevalent styles of any day and result in sustained success for the performer - even if he is a crooner.

Born in Waterford, Ireland, Val had an easy-going charm reminiscent of Bing, while his ability to remain relaxed and unruffled rivalled that of Perry Como. His voice, while perhaps lacking their richness of timbre, nevertheless had great range and flexibility. That he had been influenced by these great men was hardly in doubt and, not surprisingly in a career that kept him so long in

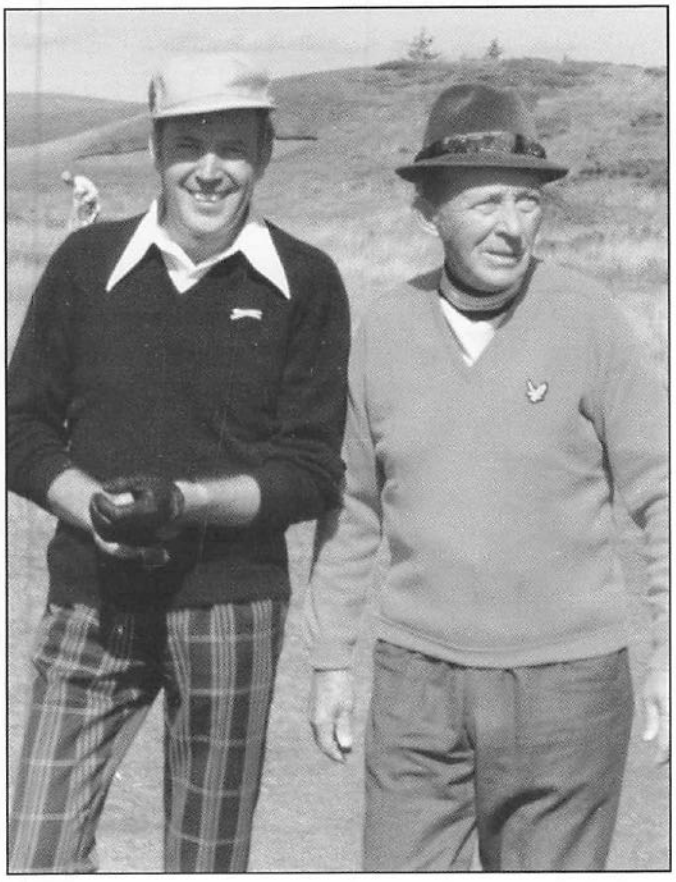
the top flight, he met both of them. In 1987 in 'People's Friend', Val reminisced about Bing as follows:

> The whole series of *Pro-Celebrity Golf* is usually played over a couple of weeks, the promoters endeavouring to put two nine-hole matches "in the can" per day. The pilot drew my attention to a tiny grass airstrip up ahead, or should I say down ahead, a long tidy row of similar aircraft to our own lining either side of it, rather like a guard of honour.
>
> Some black limousines stood by the modest reception building indicating, in fact, that I wasn't the only one arriving at that particular time. In fact as I said hello to one of the representatives from BBC Television, standing by the cars, another plane lightly touched down.
>
> "That'll be Mr. Crosby now," I heard somebody behind me say, causing my ears to prick up. One of my great personal ambitions had long been to meet the man I always considered to be the finest pop singer of all time. I felt sure the opportunity was at hand, knowing we were both heading for the same destination.
>
> A minute or two later, I was ushered into one of the waiting cars, and just as I climbed aboard, a voice said, "Oh, Val, have you met Bing?" I turned, and there entering the car parked alongside was The Man Himself.
>
> "Hi there, Val, how'ya doin'?" He reached out of the car and took my hand. "I believe we're playin' a bit of golf together today." Till that moment of course I had no idea who my playing opponent was to be.
>
> Just as our respective cars were pulling away, he opened his window and called out, "Let's have some lunch together before the game." We did just that within the hour and then made our way to the golf course. Bing, as most golfers will know, had been an extremely good amateur golfer, and even while in his early seventies he still played well. It was indeed a day I shall never forget, made even more memorable by the young Scottish lad, who had no idea who the great Mr Crosby was when he asked for my autograph during the round.

Val presented a TV show called "Val Sings Bing" as a tribute to his hero on December 28, 1981 and followed this in 1982 with an album bearing the same title which contained many of Bing's hits.

Relaxed though he was, Val always had the attitude of an ordinary guy somehow catapulted into this world of stars where he intended to make the most of performing with people he had always admired. He said in an interview: 'If these people don't give you a thrill, then you're gone!'

But, as with Bing and Perry, it was easy to underestimate Val's talent because he made it look so easy. At a time when almost all variety shows were pre-recorded, Val's went out live. He didn't work from an autocue, but simply relied on his prodigious memory to learn as many as eight new songs each week. He was equally at home with a Jim Reeves style ballad as with a comic Irish number or folk rock song. His renditions ranged from 'Walk Tall' through 'Delaney's Donkey' to 'Elusive Butterfly'. There wasn't much jazz on the show, though Val was an accomplished jazz guitarist who took great delight in being able to perform a musical duet with the great Stephan Grappelli. His guests, such as Sacha Distel and Rosemary Clooney, were greeted as if they'd just dropped in for a cup of tea from next door.



Val meets Bing at Gleneagles in Scotland in 1975.

Perry Como didn't do guest spots but Val managed to persuade him to make an exception through the recommendation of Ray Charles, who had worked as musical director on both their shows. Provided Val was prepared to make the trip out to Leeds Castle in Kent, where Perry was on location, Mr C would consent to an interview for the show. A lifelong Como fan, Val jumped at the opportunity.

But now, in 1988, Val Doonican was gone. There were no plans for a new series.

Many other entertainers would have cut their losses. We would have seen them on chat shows, in panel games, maybe even (heaven forbid!) in 'reality' shows. But not Val. He was a singer and musician who had had 24 years at the top of his game. For him, appearing on television simply as a 'personality' – though his TV personality was up there with the best - would have been too much of an anti-climax. So he disappeared.

That is, unless you know where to find him. www.valdoonican.com is an excellent website run by his fans. Both informative and entertaining, it reveals that, far from having really disappeared, Val, aged 82, is still doing live concerts, but only where and when he wants

to. He divides his time between homes in England and Spain and, like Tony Bennett, is a gifted artist who passes much of his time painting while his wife reads. He has a daughter who is a successful novelist.

The website contains three fascinating audio interviews Val has given in recent years to the site, recorded in his dressing room prior to shows. Asked who his favourites were of all the famous artists who appeared on his TV programme, he found it hard to choose. Because his shows were so professionally produced and because he personally arranged the singing parts for guests, he never had any trouble with star temperament. He did confess, however, to having a particular affection for Howard Keel and Rosemary Clooney, whom he described as 'a gorgeous lady'.

Knowing Rosemary was a friend of Bing, Val took the opportunity of asking her what Bing was 'really like'. Like many at the time, he'd heard some of the adverse criticism about Mr. Crosby that he said he took 'with a pinch of salt'. Rosemary replied that Bing could be cold and absorbed, with much on his mind, but that he took the time and trouble to write her the most wonderful letters from all over the world, letters she greatly treasured.

Val's current concerts are being posted on the website as soon as they are confirmed. They are mostly at his favourite venues in the south of England. I would strongly advise Bing fans to get along while he is still making the effort. I suspect painting, relaxing in Spain and taking vicarious pleasure in his daughter's developing career are exerting an ever increasing influence. Val confesses to always having to be busy, but even he will have to call time on his life as an entertainer sooner or later. If you have the opportunity, go and see him.

In Val Doonican you will meet a kindred spirit.

John Walton

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Michael Collins, Florida, USA

Very belated congratulations on the second "Through the Years" CD. I know that Wig sent me a copy ages ago. I was down in the Caribbean for most of December, coming back just in time for the post-Christmas frenzy. I listen only to classical music when I am at home, as I do on the portable CD player which I carry during my morning walk. Bing stuff and jazz are mainly confined to the car. However, I am glad I first tried out that CD on the big Yamaha as the sound quality is really superb. A shame it took me so long to get around to opening the packet.

All the tracks except one I already heard in some form or other though rarely (apart from those recently reissued in digital format) in anything approaching the quality we have here. The one exception is Track 13 - *We All Have A Song In Our Hearts.* That was new to me. In your notes, you mentioned about how many of Bing's songs at that time seemed uninspired. I dare say that is true. My main criticism of this one is that in many respects it was all too suitable; it fitted him like a glove. It was also too derivative. I always thought that Bing was counter-cultural in a way that was unique. Unlike millions of his compatriots, he wanted to appear older than he actually was. I have yet to meet an American whose ambition it was to do just that.

Living as I do in Florida where the skies are always blue, where orange blossom 'scents the breeze', and in a land where, as Jane Walmsley once observed, death remains an optional extra, I feel I have gained some faint insight into the American fixation on youth and staying forever young. It was in the very air that Bing breathed, yet he seemed to move in the opposite direction. True, laser and liposuction, Botox and collagen were still some decades ahead but the main outlines were already in place by the time Crosby recorded these numbers. Evelyn Waugh mercilessly skewered this national obsession in his famous satirical novel *The Loved One,* published just three years before Bing made these recordings.

Admittedly, much of Bing's posturing was tongue in cheek. After all, he was still a young man when he first latched on to that gimmick of having been around since before Methuselah. Still, there may have been something more serious underlying it all. I think he may have become disenchanted early on with the growing complexity of life especially as it was evolving in the United States. Himself a complex man in so many ways, he yearned for a simpler life which beckoned from an earlier era.

As I listened, I kept saying; "That tune sounds awfully familiar." Crosby had already moved on several tracks before I eventually nailed it. My thoughts flew back to the early Fifties and to the South-West seaboard of Ireland, to a remote place of quite astonishing beauty where Gaelic was still the dominant language at that time. I recalled in particular a gentleman whose repertoire came from the Gaelic tradition - and whose

nephews and nieces were in the forefront of the revival of that same tradition in the decades that followed. There was, however, one English song which he enjoyed singing from time to time and which reminded him of his own younger days.

Little Grey Home In the West was his special favourite. If you are unfamiliar with the song or simply need to refresh your memory, do a Google on McCormack's version which you will find on YouTube. Not vintage John Mac, perhaps, but even indifferent J. M. still sounds pretty good. It's yet another one of those songs seemingly tailor-made for Bing but which he never recorded or even sang on the air. This is not a carbon copy along the lines of *Eileen/Mountains of Mourne* but one can see where elements of the earlier tune, as well as some of the song's sentiments, were borrowed and incorporated in this 1951 recording. Bing's version of *Little Grey Home* may have forever eluded us; *We All Have A Song* is about as close as we are likely to get to what might have been.

(Editor: I duly listened to McCormack's version of 'Little Grey Home In the West' and Michael is right. There are indeed similarities. Quite separately, I have been in detailed correspondence with Michael about Bing's Longines set of the 1960s. I am trying to encourage Michael to write an article about these tracks but in the meantime, what are members' views about these recordings. Please write and tell us.)

Chuck Ford, Venice, Florida, USA

I enjoyed reading Ken Crossland's segment in the recent BING magazine concerning the most popular singer. He posed the question that if Bing is #1 and Elvis is #2, who is #3? I believe I can answer that question for you with some authority. I have spent years researching and analyzing the pop music charts, and my conclusion is that #3 belongs to Billy Murray. Now, few people living today would have the slightest clue as to who Billy Murray was, but in the first quarter of the Twentieth Century, he was unquestionably the most popular singer around. In addition to both Bing and Billy being the most popular singers of their day, there many other similarities. They were both of Irish extraction, they both loved the outdoors and sports and they both created what could almost be considered a second act, Bing with the Andrews Sisters and Billy with Ada Jones. For the results of my research, please see my web site at:

www.vandammeford.com/cford/music/

Maureen Solomon, Toluca Lake, California, USA

Got the BING magazine the other day and it's terrific as usual. I read it cover to cover until 1:30 AM.

Thank you so much for the very kind and flattering comments. I am going to send copies to people in the motion picture and TV industry. In fact, I am going to see Michael Feinstein this weekend and will mention it to him. I know he gets the magazine as well.

I went to the service for Mort Lachman last week. He was great friends with Mel Shavelson, with whom I worked during the last years of his life. I always asked Mel, Mort and others for Bing stories. Mort told me this, the first time he met Bing:

Bob and Bing were having their picture taken, probably on the recording set of one of the "Road" pictures. Hope grabbed Mort and positioned him between himself and Bing for the photo. Bing said, "Why are we taking a picture with this schmuck?" Since the picture was being taken for a Washington State newspaper and Mort had been born in Seattle and gone to the University of Washington, Bob replied that having Mort in the photo would garner additional attention in the Northwest.

Bing asked Mort where he went to school and when Mort told him, Bing started singing the school song, and went all around the studio singing. He was thrilled to meet a fellow Washingtonian. Thereafter, Bing adopted Mort as his own. And when Bing married Kathryn, he gave Mort a pleasant task. Whenever Bing went away, he asked Mort to watch over Kathryn, squire her around and just make sure she was okay. He was worried about the wolves in Hollywood and also wanted someone trustworthy who was always there to help her. Aside from writing, Mort's other interest was golf—what else? His most frequent partner was Dolores Hope. I have to say, he was a sweet wonderful man. Very quiet and low key, but one of Bob Hope's funniest most reliable writers.

Keith Parkinson, St. Helens, UK

As always, I enjoyed reading the recent BING cover to cover. I was particularly impressed with Maureen Solomon's piece on *Going Hollywood.* It read extremely well so her talk with audio additions must have been impressive. I also learned from Maureen things I didn't know or had forgotten about *Going Hollywood!*

John Newton's article on Bing's rarest recordings showed a depth of research for which the magazine is becoming notable. I wouldn't dispute any title in his top ten of rarities. It reminded me of hearing another rarity in 1968 when I visited the late Bob Roberts at "Bob's Store" in Chatham. Bob had just received some acetate 78s from the USA. He had found out that Bing had made a non-musical series of recordings for what I imagine was the American Dental Association. The message on the discs was aimed at children. I think it impressed upon them the importance of brushing teeth. Anyhow, Bob had written to the ADA and asked if they could trace the recordings and let him have copies. They obliged by copying the discs in their possession and sending them along with photocopies of the accompanying booklet. The recordings would have no appeal unless you were a completist, but Bob was just that. Whether the discs would figure on any listing by John I doubt, especially as they have no musical content.

(Editor: Greg Van Beek mentioned what must be the same records in his article on Bing's PSA recordings in BING #148. Amazing that the ADA would send copies across the Atlantic. The late Bob Roberts was of course one of the most prolific collectors in the Crosby world.)

Arthur Blood, Derby, UK

Thank you for BING 151. It has been an excellent read and a credit to all involved in its production. It's difficult to say which of the articles that I enjoyed the most because they were all interesting and informative.

I did particularly enjoy reading about the screening of *White Christmas* on the big screen and the article "Bing's Last White Christmas" was great. Martin McQuade's review of the book "Sinatra in Hollywood" also made some very interesting reading.

I think all contributors to BING are to be thanked for taking the time and effort to write these articles. I am pleased that you continue to report what Mike Carey of Radio Derby plays on his 'Memorable Melodies' show. BING has to be the best fan magazine around. I was however very perturbed to read about the last Sepia CD being made available for downloading before it reached the retail outlets.

In conclusion Malcolm, thank you for finding the right place to reproduce the Christmas card I sent you and for all the work that you and your team put into producing BING.

(Editor: Arthur has great fun manipulating photos of Bing and this photo he has created of Bing as a WW2 fighter pilot is fascinating. Amazing what you can do with a computer. Bing really looks the part!)

Answer to the Crossword Clue

Groaner. An anagram of 'organ' plus 'ER' for Elizabeth Regina.

The Billy May albums

The issue of the Bing and Satchmo album and the involvement of Billy May prompted an interesting discussion on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum bulletin board in April / May. The participants were Steve Fay, a prolific contributor to the board who lives in Cuba, Illinois, USA and is described as a historical interpreter and naturalist, Alan Matheson, a professional musician from Canada and John Richard Baker (known as Jarbie) from Kenilworth in the UK who is a retired insurance executive. We publicized Jarbie's new discography of Bing's recordings in our last issue.

Steve opened the batting with:

I am hoping that several of you might wish to jump in and share your knowledge and thoughts about what might account for the inconsistencies between the four albums Bing recorded with Billy May:

1) *Fancy Meeting You Here* (1958)
2) *El Senor Bing* (1960)
3) *Bing & Satchmo* (1960)
4) *That Traveling Two-Beat* (1964)

Two—*Fancy* and *Satchmo*—tend to come up frequently in discussions here of top or favorite Bing albums, but not so *El Senor* or *Two-Beat* which on the discography on our website are graded as only C and B-level results, respectively.

There are similarities that cut across the good and lesser of these albums. For example, three have a vocal collaborator, either Rosie or Louis, and three have an international theme. *Bing and Satchmo* has, as one would expect, a strong Dixieland component, and *Traveling Two-Beat*'s notes say the album is all about Dixie-ifying songs from all around the world, but (an irksome inconsistency to me) many times its orchestrations sound less like Bourbon Street and a lot whole more like Meredith Willson (as in *The Music Man*) — just listen for the piccolos and Xylophone flourishes.

Listening again to *That Traveling Two-Beat* recently, I must say that Bing and Rosie seem to be having a whale of a good time doing the album, and I can't help wishing that they had done a show of all (or most) of those performances that one could watch. It might have been very entertaining to see the body language and facial expressions that might have accompanied these duets. Still, as an audio-only experience, I must agree with Steven's (Steven Lewis) review that an excitement similar to what they incite in *Fancy Meeting You Here* doesn't happen. Is it a monotony of the arrangements or selections as he theorizes? Or is it also a case of too many songs with their lyrics rewritten to no great

improvement, as I wonder? And what role or responsibility might Billy May have had in any of this?

Similarly, with *El Senor Bing*, while I find some of the two-song Latin medleys fun, is a whole album of them a case of beating an old horse to death? Are we cheated out of some essential level of variety and surprise we want in an artistic listening experience when album creators latch onto such a "cool idea" so tightly and won't let go. A few of those numbers may have deserved more complete, individual, and unlinked versions—to a powerful and memorable effect. Perhaps a few of the lesser numbers might have been gathered in to medleys of three or more tunes instead. Perhaps something non-Latin, reinterpreted in a Latin-American style might have been an interesting surprise.

Bing and Rosemary on a Hollywood Palace show.

Since May was a well-known arranger and band leader, it seems to me that he must share whatever praise and blame there is regarding all four of these albums. Do any of you know or have theories about what his role, responsibilities, and influence might have been in how these four albums came out? And what inconsistencies or commonalities between them are striking to you? Do particular strengths and weaknesses of Billy May show in these collaborations with Bing?

Alan responded with

This is an interesting topic and I have to agree with Steve as to the inconsistencies between these Billy May arranged recordings. While I like "Travelin' Two Beat", I think the songs overall are not as strong as those on "Fancy Meeting You Here". There's a big gap, musically, between "I Can't Get Started" and "Knees Up Mother Brown" (for me, the best and most relaxed track on "Travelin'" is "I Get Ideas"- great tune). Perhaps the material used for "Travelin'" was simply less inspiring for May and he felt that adding lots of "bells and whistles", so to speak would enliven things. Bing and Rosemary get the most out of the tunes on "Travelin'" and their musical and personal rapport is well in evidence.

I agree, too, that the circus/marching band orchestrations May uses are a bit much at times-reminiscent of May's "Big Fat Brass" LP on Capitol (fun, but not my favourite examples of his arranging - interestingly, he had a big success at Capitol records with his "Bozo The Clown" series for children) - and rather contrary to the stated "dixieland" approach touted in the liner notes. I wish that Matty Matlock (from the Bob Crosby band and the arranger for "Bing With A Beat") had been used for these projects. He was a versatile arranger and was a master at the big band/dixieland style of writing. Billy May is one of my favourite writers, too, but more for his work for Charlie Barnet, Glenn Miller and Frank Sinatra. May did almost all the arrangements for the Sinatra/Ellington album and his work sounds enough like Duke to fool people!

Steve came back with:

Alan, it is interesting that you picked out two of my favorite songs from the two Bing/Rosie collaborations: "I Can't Get Started" and "I Get Ideas."

I wonder if part of the problem with *El Senor Bing* and *Traveling Two-Beat*, is that this was a time when people were still figuring out the long-play album as an artform. The idea of a bunch of Latin-rhythmed medleys or a bunch of Dixieland rhythmed, hokily re-lyricked songs might have worked just fine as formative themes for a couple of half-hour radio programs (which people would hear once and look forward to a different show next week), but for an album that one would listen to again and again, they don't do quite so well. Some of the individual selections are very good, but they long for more variety in the grouping—even the interruption of a Chesterfield or Philco commercial might be welcome.

To the extent that May be partly culpable for the lesser two album's weaknesses, it isn't because he can't do better, as the other two records in this group surely attest, not to mention his other accomplishments which you mention. Perhaps just having somebody like Matty Matlock in the studio when *Traveling* was being made might have reminded May that Dixieland ought to sound like Dixieland. May didn't forget that on the album with Louis. Having Louis in the studio could keep one's

attention focused I would think!

Alan commented:

Once again, you've raised some interesting points. I think you're right about the quest for form with the early LPs but it's also possible that by 1964 when "Travelin.." was done, the real popularity of the Dixieland revival had passed somewhat (from its biggest days c.1949-51 when there were a number of dixie-style pop record hits) and there may have been a concern about "Travelin'..." being too jazzy perhaps. A more relaxed approach would have helped this LP (and maybe a smaller band - Matty Matlock did so well with the Bob Cats style instrumentation for Bing on "The Cool....of the Evening"). I don't mind "El Senor Bing" but would have liked full length versions of the better tunes on this album. I wonder if it may have been conceived as a potential "sing along" album (seriously) or maybe this was an attempt at novelty. Ella Fitzgerald did a similar "medley" style LP for Capitol, arranged and conducted by the great Benny Carter. Finally, I agree that May did well by Bing and Louis - now I need to get that new (finally complete) reissue.

Steve carried on the discussion:

With the two Rosemary Clooney - Bing recordings in the four done with Billy May, there seems to be an interesting participation by song-writing teams in their origins. The notes on *Fancy* ('58) say that Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen had come up with an idea for a new album by Bing and Rosie, "a sort of vocal tour of the globe." And while these writers are credited with the idea, only 3 of the 13 songs included are theirs. In fact works by 11 different song writers or teams are included on that album.

The notes for *Traveling* ('64) say, "Bing, Rosemary, and Billy got the urge to do a Dixieland album together, and so they called into consultation the hit-songwriting team of Jay Livingston and Ray Evans, old friends from Bing and Rosie's days on the Paramount Pictures lot." It goes on to say that Livingston and Evans compiled the selections for this album and "wrote tongue-in-cheek new verses for some...all new lyrics for some...interludes, counter-melodies, and musical embellishments for all" [the ellipses are from the notes, I'm not leaving out phrasing]. They also seem to have come up with the album title. Incidentally, Livingston and Evans authored "Calcutta," not the most striking number on *Fancy Meeting You Here*.

Perhaps this song writing team had too heavy-handed of a role in *That Traveling Two-Beat* and May was simply executing their vision on that project. It certainly seems that they may be responsible for one not being able to hear much of the original songs in their rewrites (whether or not that might have been preferable). Does anyone know if they showed much sensitivity to what Dixieland Jazz actually is in their other work?

Alan had some thoughts on this:

I don't think of Livingston and Evans as being too connected to the Dixieland style per se but Billy May certainly was as a player and sometime as an arranger. Among Billy May's last recordings as a trumpet were done for a 1943 session released as "New American Jazz" where he played alongside New Orleans and Chicago style luminaries including the great Jack Teagarden (trombone), Jimmie Noone (clarinet) and Joe Sullivan (piano). Check out May's great playing on "Clambake In Bb" and "I'm Sorry I Made You Cry". Excellent jazz playing as is May's trumpet solo on the soundtrack version of "In The Mood" (with Glenn Miller) in the film *Sun Valley Serenade*.

To get back to the question at hand, in the case of "Travelin'..." I still feel that a smaller, looser band would have been better in many ways.

This brought in Jarbie.

The contrasts between "Fancy Meeting—" and "Travellin' Two Beat" are fascinating, and the reasons for the contrast adduced are quite illuminating, though personally I think the latter album is just a little underrated.

Interesting though, that Steve started this discussion about four albums and one - "El Senor Bing" has not been mentioned since. I believe this to be one of Bing's flops. But why? It has many popular and well regarded Latin songs, a first class arranger at the height of his arranging career and generally everything going for it, yet it sounds as if it is all off a production line for background music - in line with the singalong albums perhaps. I have great admiration for Billy May (though just occasionally I find his "fat trombones" a little overdone) and Bing stands alone amongst my idols, but the two of them, together, here, don't spark. When put alongside the other three albums this is the standout No-No. But why?

Billy May was known sometimes to sub-contract work out but I don't think that this was so here (or was it?); there does not seem to me to be anything intrinsically wrong in stringing songs together in a pair (or is there?); there is no reason why a single theme - in this case Latin songs and rhythms - should not work - it has been done on other numerous occasions: - so what went wrong? Why does it sound so lack-lustre?

Steve was first to respond:

You prompt me to go into more detail about El Senor Bing. I just listened to it again, cranked up pretty loud. If I were into the Cha-Cha and Rumba, I would have had to get on my feet and cut the rug! The opening duet is certainly a very high energy one: 'In the Still of the Night/I Could Have Danced All Night' in a very quick-stepping Latin tempo. And while as crooning numbers either of these would be worthy of getting individual, full-length treatments, I think they work very well in this sort of arrangement. Bing's voice is very strong, and RESONANT, on this pair. It opens the album well, I think.

I suppose I have a couple of issues with the album though: (1) I don't think all of the medley companions complement one another, and (2) I think more than a few of the numbers could have been much stronger as full length, un-twinned versions that Bing could really put a memorable stamp on.

Some examples:

C'est Magnifique/Taking a Chance on Love*

Heavenly Night*/My Shawl

How High the Moon/Old Devil Moon*

In this group of medleys, I think the songs I put the asterisks [*] next to deserved to get full treatment, and judging by what Bing did with the short versions in the medleys they might have been pretty good that way. "Heavenly Night" is one of the first ones on the album in which the driving Latin rhythm eases off enough that Bing can be particularly expressive. On the other hand, if "My Shawl" were left off the album, nobody would miss it.

Between the 2nd and 3rd in that group comes another medley that seems just fine to me as is: Marta/Rose in Her Hair. I might like the second one a little better, but something about the mood of these two makes them seem well-suited together. Then, just following the Moon medley is a pairing that seems to have nothing holding it together beyond a similar construction in the titles: Pagan Love Song/Cuban Love Song; in fact, the first one of that grouping seems much more Polynesian than Latin American.

And the next pair, Ramona/Amapola, seem to be brought together again because the titles rhyme! Perhaps because I have a fondness for the subtle Latin rhythms of Gene Austin's version of "Ramona," this one seems lacking in expressiveness, especially with its grating choral arrangement coming in at one point. Bing does a nice job with "Amapola," making it hard for the listener not to wonder if it would not have been better alone in a track.

The next two pairings have really good numbers in them:

Malaguena/Andalucia

Down Argentine Way/What a Difference a Day Made.

The story in "Malaguena" seems to get cut off in order to work in the other song, and Andalucia is by far the most *lovely* interpretation Bing does on the album, and certainly ought to have deserved a complete rendition! I similarly think "Argentine" and "Difference" could have merited full separate versions, the latter having become somewhat of a jazz standard and something it his nice to hear Bing put his claim on (though here it is just a half-medley-version claim).

Again/Allez-Vous-En, which ends the album, seem fine to me as a medley and don't work badly to close the album.

There is quite a dynamic range in how this record seems recorded. Bing's voice is often way out in front of the orchestra, but the percussion or horns barge in loudly in places, and sometimes the chorus, too, but they only appear on some numbers, and sometimes, thank heavens, are more delicately employed. It doesn't remind me of the Sing-Along records, though there might be passages you could point out to me where I would hear what you mean.

Jarbie responded:

Many thanks for your considered views. I have played through the LP again (twice). I readily concede that some of the songs stand up pretty well on their own. "Rose In Her Hair" is nice but much inferior to the later recording, and I agree to a certain extent with what you say about other tracks.

I suspect that were this all done by a second rank artist it would have been very well received, but this is Bing, and against much of his other work it compares badly. I fear that I reach pretty much the same conclusion as before, though I think that my view is based more on the overall result than one based on careful selection and listening to individual tracks. Individually some do indeed stand on their own, but collectively they all become a single coagulated mass with little to differentiate between them. An hour after hearing, none stand out with me in the way that many tracks from "Bing and Satchmo" or "Fancy Meeting" (or indeed "Travelin' Two Beat") do. It might just be me and the extended effect of unrelieved Latin rhythms (though I don't fundamentally dislike them). My view, I know, and I can understand, as always, that others may differ.

Alan Matheson commented:

Really interesting observations, Steve and Jarbie. I agree

that full-length versions would have been great on a number of these songs. Bing's in excellent voice, floating above the high energy rhythm section and brass playing. There was a growing interest in Latin music in the late '50's and early '60's (via Perez Prado, Cal Tjader and other pre-bossa nova artists) and Peggy Lee did a "Latin A La Lee" around this time. Too bad that Bing and Billy may didn't simply do LPs worth of full length Latin songs. Thanks for stimulating my interest in re-listening to "El Senor Bing".

Steve wound it all up with:

Jarbie and Alan, I wonder if our armchair listening to El Senor Bing might not be giving it its due; it might sound entirely different after consumption of a pitcher of Margaritas in the company of a slinky dance partner!

I think more varied pacing, more of a mix of full-length versions (not only medleys), and even a duet partner here or there might have made a great deal of difference. What if Peggy Lee, Rosemary Clooney, and another female vocalist (Ella Fitzgerald, Lena Horne, Dinah Shore???) each had a guest duet with Bing on such a record? It might have been a much more unforgettable album.

I agree with Jarbie, part of what may irritate us about this recording is that we have higher expectation for what a Bing Crosby album can be. And looking at this quartet of Billy May collaborations, really makes us face what those expectations are, since we are bound to be as delighted about some of this work as we are disappointed by other parts of it.

We may have come full circle here in this discussion, but if anyone else wants to give any of these 4 records a listen and volunteer additional kinds of comments, I am certainly interested in reading them.

(Editor: Well, there's an invitation! So let's hear from you.

I tend to try to remain impartial in matters like these but I can't resist it this time. I really like all the albums mentioned except 'El Senor Bing' which, although Bing is in good voice on a number of tracks, has all the hallmarks of having been thrown together and dashed off by him. Possibly he was singing to backing tracks as well rather than performing live with the orchestra. He should surely have re-recorded several of the songs, e.g. "How High The Moon / Old Devil Moon" and "Marta" but I suspect his mind was elsewhere. He was flitting back and forth to Mexico at that time, having just finished filming "High Time". One can argue that the Bing and Satchmo album was done only a week after 'El Senor Bing' and he was in good voice on that one. However we know Bing always seemed to try a little bit harder when recording with another artist than in his solo efforts. The instrumental backing for 'El Senor Bing' is, with the benefit of hindsight, dreadful and Billy May just got it wrong in my humble opinion. A re-release of the album as "Bing Goes Latin" toned down the backing so that Bing's voice was more to the fore but somehow this made the overall effect worse.

The album was recorded in June 1960 but was not released until October 1961 which must tell us that either the producers were not very happy with it or they could not find a record company to issue it. However, the initial reaction from the trade was positive.

> EL SENOR BING Bing Crosby. MGM E 3890
> Crosby is in good voice on this package of swingy standards, arranged and cut by Billy May and recorded by Crosby's Project records, Inc., for release on the MGM label. The album features Latin treatments of 20 great oldies — each fine deejay programming — including "In the Still of the Night," "Marta," "Again," "Ramona" and "Cuban Love Song".
> (*Billboard,* October 9, 1961)

It was interesting to look at the response from fans when the album was first released. Anything new from Bing was, of course, welcomed with open arms and Frank Murphy writing in the Crosby Post for December 1961 wrote:

> "And finally we come to EL SENOR BING, that long awaited LP from MGM which has at last made its appearance. This is one of Bing's very rare solo LPs these days. Bing likes to hide himself away in choruses and with other artistes just now, and whoever persuaded him to make this solo album is deserving of deepest gratitude and thanks. Here is Bing we love to hear, all by himself, and with a batch of great standards."

Frank always tended to think that Bing could do no wrong as did Leslie Gaylor but Leslie commented on the album in the same issue as follows:

> "I like the "El Senor Bing" LP very much, a nice selection of songs and Bing has been recorded very nicely and very similar to American Decca methods of recording. I myself consider it was a blow when Bing packed it up with Decca. I'm talking of technical reasons. Had Bing still been with them, the recordings would have presented him with that superb deep masculine voice as on "Gigi". However for me, I really go for the present day rich deep tones of Bing; these are evident on "El Senor Bing" and make up for the one or two songs that Bing seems to have taken on a little too high a key."

Fred Reynolds, writing years later in his wonderful series of books said:

> All the songs, with one exception, have only a single chorus which, in the circumstances, is no bad thing as Crosby is distinctly off form and at times shows an uncharacteristic lack of confidence. He is not helped by accompaniments that are consistently pretentious and the original intentions of the songs are unrealized. It has been suggested that this was Crosby at his nadir and it would be difficult to remain this side of idolatry and argue otherwise. It all sounds very much the result of fatigue.
> (*The Crosby Collection, 1926–1977, part four,* page

288)

I do not consider that all of the tracks were poor and Fred was probably a little harsh in his appraisal. However to add that damning verdict, Ken Barnes in his book "The Crosby Years" described the album as "dreadful," saying it was "a kind of Muzak concept featuring five medleys of two songs apiece."

Reverting to "That Travelling Two-Beat", one factor to be considered is that Bing and Rosie weren't always together in the studio for this one. They recorded the first four tracks together in August 1964 but the album was not finished off until December that same year with Bing recording his contribution separately from Rosemary. To illustrate this, there is a lovely outtake of Bing singing his part of "Come To The Mardi Gras" with Jay Livingston in Rosie's absence. Bing and Rosemary did, of course, perform four songs from the album on the Hollywood Palace show of February 19, 1966.

However, enough of me, let's hear <u>your</u> views on Billy May's work with Bing.)

BING ON THE BOX

As mentioned in our Editorial, Bert Bishop has stepped down as a main contributor to the magazine and your Editor is the temporary replacement.

TV highlights

USA & Canada

Very few films seen on the box in the USA but we did notice the following recently:

High Society	TCM
Road to Bali	TCM
The Road to Hong Kong	Cinemax

In addition, *Going Hollywood* is scheduled to be shown on TCM on August 3.

Deserving a special mention is the showing of *Faith, Hope & Hogan* on the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) on June 15. Launched in 1981 when many felt there would be little demand for a Catholic network, EWTN has become the largest religious media network in the world, transmitting programming 24 hours a day to more than 148 million homes in 144 countries. This short film was made in 1952 in Palm Springs and Bing, Bob Hope, Ben Hogan, Phil Harris and Ralph Kiner were featured. The film was produced by Father Keller for the Christopher Movement. Bing sang a chorus of "One Little Candle" accompanied by Perry Botkin. This is how Bob Hope described it.

> A couple of years ago I went to Palm Springs to relax. My phone rang and a voice said, "This is Father Keller." Father Keller is the big mind behind the Christopher Movement. The Christophers are trying to spread religion in general. They don't make any special effort to spread the Catholic Religion, they just try to spread good to the whole world. . . .
>
> "I'm making a little movie short for the Christophers with Ben Hogan," he said, "I'd like to have you come over and say a few words. . . ."
>
> The next day Bing and I joined him there [at the golf club]. The "few words" wound up as an hour and a half of dialogue between golf shots. The entire country must have seen this film by now because every time Hogan wins a tournament, they run it on television.
>
> (Bob Hope, *Have Tux, Will Travel*, page 272)

Live with Regis and Kelly is a syndicated American television morning talk show, hosted by Regis Philbin and Kelly Ripa. On the March 6 show, Regis mentioned his forthcoming concert tour and talked at length about Bing's boyhood home, Gonzaga University, Bing's career and his career achievements - and he showed linking photos. Regis spoke very warmly about Bing, held up the sweatshirt, Bing Crosby golf balls, and Carolyn Schneider's book. Regis followed this up when he was interviewed on the *Craig Ferguson Show* on CBS-TV on March 16. Regis was again promoting his forthcoming tour and he told of his love of Bing's singing and his imminent visit to Spokane, which Stephanie Plowman has described earlier in this issue. Regis re-told the story of his meeting with Bing on the Joey Bishop Show and then went on to sing "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Lo-Ral" to complete the story.

Jon Oye drew our attention to the episode of *The Simpsons* on March 29. An unmistakably Father O'Malley-like character visited Springfield, appearing during the first five minutes. The voice wasn't quite there, but the animators created a pretty good likeness of Bing and included a set of golf clubs in the back seat of his car.

There must be many radio programmes featuring Bing in the USA and Canada but unfortunately we lack the details. One man who does his bit for Bing every week is **Arne Fogel** who hosts "THE BING SHIFT" on Saturday nights at 7pm CST on KBEM-FM "JAZZ 88 - (88.5 FM) in Minneapolis & St. Paul, MN. His show can be heard internationally, via the KBEM-JAZZ 88 website at: http://jazz88.mpls.k12.mn.us/. Keep up the good work, Arne.

We would welcome details of other radio shows which regularly feature Bing.

UK

In the UK, *Holiday Inn* and *Here Come the WAVES* were both shown by satellite broadcaster Sky Movies Classics in June. Sky Movies also have *Road to Bali* available as a free download. Disappointing that the terrestrial channels again did not show any Bing films.

However, UK viewers did have the opportunity to see a profile of the Andrews Sisters which contained many references to Bing and a number of still

The Sisters first recording session with Bing and Joe Venuti in 1939.

photographs which were new to us. *The Andrews Sisters - Queens of the Music Machines* was shown on BBC4 in March and traced Patty, Maxene and LaVerne's journey from a poor Minneapolis background to international fame. Mary Wilson of the Supremes and British burlesque group the Puppini Sisters were also featured.

UK radio

This may be the point where our non-UK readers quickly pass over to another page. However, if they have the Internet, they ought to pause because most of the programmes can be heard over the web. The BBC has a 'listen-again' feature which enables us to listen to a broadcast at a more convenient time in the 7 days following its initial transmission. So why not give it a go and tune in to the shows we mention?

The People's Chart

The chart, compiled by UK licensing organization PPL (Phonographic Performance Ltd) to mark its 75th anniversary, was unveiled in a special three-hour countdown, "The People's Chart," by Rob Brydon on BBC Radio 2 (www.bbc.co.uk/radio2) on April 13. The top 75 was compiled from PPL records of licensed use of recorded music in clubs, cafés, supermarkets and so on, as well as radio airplay. Some surprising results were revealed, to say the least.

Procol Harum's 1967 classic "A Whiter Shade of Pale" was been named as the U.K.'s most-heard recording in all public places over the past 75 years. "A Whiter Shade" beat Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody" to win the distinction. That late 1975 chart-topper landed at No. 2, with the Everly Brothers' 1958 perennial "All I Have To Do Is Dream" at No. 3.

"The compilation of the chart was both very exciting and a real challenge," said PPL chairman and CEO Fran Nevrkla. "It involved some extensive research into PPL's archives, and information held in paper form during periods long before modern technology made its mark. The chart represents not only what has historically been played on British radio, but also what was popular in clubs, pubs, in discotheques and countless other places."

All very interesting but why are we mentioning it? Well, Bing was there too. The top ten on the PPL chart was as follows:

1. Procol Harum, "A Whiter Shade Of Pale"
2. Queen,"Bohemian Rhapsody"
3. The Everly Brothers, "All I Have To Do Is Dream"
4. Wet Wet Wet, "Love Is All Around"
5. Bryan Adams, "(Everything I Do) I Do It For You"
6. Robbie Williams, "Angels"
7. Elvis Presley, "All Shook Up"
8. Abba, "Dancing Queen"
9. Perry Como, "Magic Moments"
10. Bing Crosby, "White Christmas"

Can't help wondering if proper records were kept in PPL's early years as I'm sure that Bing's "White Christmas" was heard more often that Procol Harum's song over the 75-year period! Bing also came in at No.

30 with "Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town." No Frank Sinatra songs were included in the top 75. Overall, I am rather sceptical about the results and I seriously doubt that thorough research was done. I'll bet a lot of the early records have been lost.

The Crosby presenters

Members may not realise how Bert Bishop was able to compile his article about the local radio stations in the UK when many were out of his reception area and the broadcasts were not always available on the Internet. Several members used to tape relevant extracts from broadcasts and send them to Bert on cassette. **Stan White** and **Maggie Ryan** did the bulk of the collation and your Editor heard Stan's compilation cassette as it was on its way to Bert. Several of the presenters receive newly issued Bing CDs courtesy of Ernest Sutkowski and sometimes the ICC. The latest Sepia CD got several mentions. In addition a number of our members regularly request Bing tracks and in particular Trevor Wagstaff, Stan White, Maggie Ryan, Ian Lawrence and Bert Bishop deserve plaudits for this. All of these efforts ensure that Bing is not forgotten over the air waves.

Amongst the National broadcasters on BBC Radio2 (www.bbc.co.uk/radio2), Russell Davies often features Bing with colleagues David Jacobs and Desmond Carrington occasionally joining in. David played "Incurably Romantic" on a recent programme commenting "A voice in a million" at the conclusion of the record.

Several of the BBC local radio presenters have huge catchment areas and have the potential to reach a large audience. Paul Barnes, Mike Carey, Anne Hopper, Howard Leader, David Lowe and Bill Rennells all promote our man consistently. ***The Late Paul Barnes*** show between 11pm & 1am on Saturday nights is heard across seven BBC areas, a vast geographical spread with a large population. You can hear it again each week at www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/radio/bbc_radio_norfolk/. Paul features the Crosby Calendar on his first broadcast of each month, invariably playing the "Song of the month" and one or two others in the same segment. He also gave a nice tribute to Bing on his birthday.

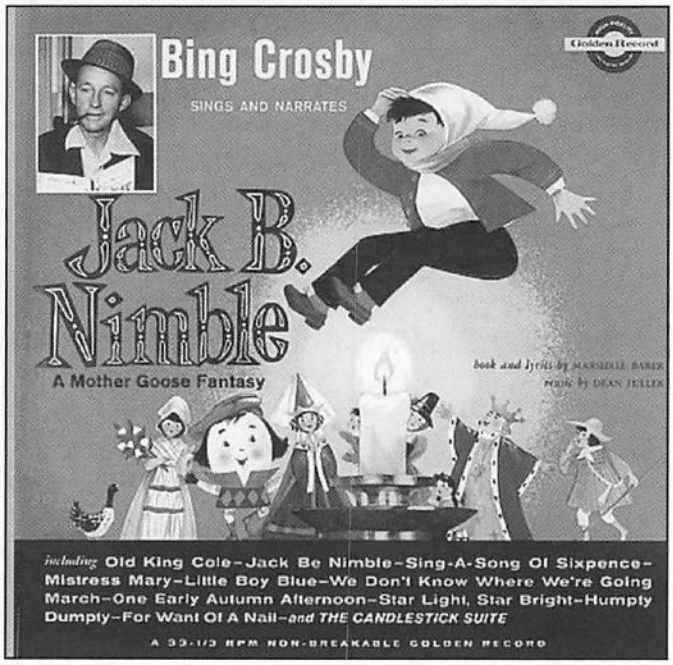
Your editor was interviewed on **Anne Hopper's** Sunday afternoon request show on BBC Radio Cumbria on May 31. The interview was primarily about the Perry Como book but I did manage to supply Anne with part of the medley Bing and Perry performed on Bing's TV show in 1960 and Anne closed the programme with this. Anne emails us each month with details of the Bing songs she has played and in the period from March to mid-June, she broadcast an incredible 33 tracks and so, she is the *Bing on the Box* star this time. Many of her shows have two or three songs involving Bing and in the period under review she has played tracks as varied as "Hand Holdin' Music", "I've Got the World on a String" and "Talk to the Animals" as well as the Bing and Perry medley I mentioned. You can listen again to Anne's latest show at:

www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/radio/bbc_radio_cumbria/

Bill Rennells' Sunday night request programme is called *Harmony Night* and can be heard again each week at:

www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/radio/bbc_radio_oxford/

Due to the changeover with Bert, I do not have all the details of the various radio shows featuring Bing, but from the cassettes I have heard, Bill Rennells deserves two bouquets. One is for playing 17 Crosby songs in the period from mid-March to mid-June and the second is for playing the rarest track – "For Want of a Nail" from the *Jack B. Nimble* CD.


Bing Crosby
SINGS AND NARRATES
Golden Record
Jack B. Nimble
A Mother Goose Fantasy
including Old King Cole–Jack Be Nimble–Sing-A-Song Of Sixpence–Mistress Mary–Little Boy Blue–We Don't Know Where We're Going March–One Early Autumn Afternoon–Star Light, Star Bright–Humpty Dumpty–For Want Of A Nail–and THE CANDLESTICK SUITE
A 33-1/3 RPM NON-BREAKABLE GOLDEN RECORD

I understand that we gave the wrong address for the show last time and it should have been:

Bill Rennells,
Harmony Night
BBC Oxford
269 Banbury Rd
Oxford
OX2 7DW

My apologies to those presenters whose work I have not mentioned. We'll do better next time.

A Crosby query

Back on February 26, I received the following email at 15:29 from Billy Butler who is a presenter on Radio Merseyside.

Info please on a crosby song——Lyrics
Oh bye-e-i-eah-when twilight is deep in the sky
Bye-e-i-eah someone that I long to see
Is deep in my memory
And the loneliness deep in my heart calls to you calls to you
I live in the memory of many dreams ago
When you were mine and I was yours alone
My love for you will not die etc. etc.

Any idea————————Many thanks
Billy Butler

By chance, I was at home in front of the computer and so was able to reply at 15:34 explaining that the song was "Baia," and giving the recording date and the full lyrics. This brought forth a quick reply from Billy:

Now that's what I call service!!!!

Australia & New Zealand

We receive very little information about radio shows featuring Bing in Australasia but one programme we do know about is that presented by Bob Neate and Ken Boness on behalf of the **Australian Bing Crosby Society** on Radio Eastern FM 98.1. This radio station is based in the outer-eastern suburbs of Melbourne, Victoria with coverage across the municipalities of Knox, Maroondah, Whitehorse, Manningham and Yarra Ranges. The potential coverage is more than 600,000 people and the programming focuses on community information sharing, mixed with easy listening music which is where Bob and Ken come in playing Bing and his legendary associates. They can be heard on Tuesday mornings between 11:00am and noon. The broadcast cannot be received over the Internet at the moment.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Once In A While

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Jimmy Boyd, a singer best known for recording the Christmas novelty hit "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus" in 1952 when he was 13, died on March 7 at the age of 70. After winning the *Al Jarvis Talent Show* on KLAC-TV Channel 13, Boyd appeared on *The Frank Sinatra Show* and was signed to a recording contract with Columbia. His first recording success was with a country song, "(The Angels Are Lighting) God's Little Candles." Three weeks after "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus" was released, the song was No. 1 on the Billboard charts. It sold 2 million records in less than 10 weeks. Although it came to be regarded as a holiday classic, the ditty about a child who can't understand why Mommy is cheating on Daddy with Santa Claus caused controversy in some quarters when the original featuring Boyd's childish treble was released.

Jimmy Boyd

The Catholic Church condemned the song for implying even a tenuous link between sex and the religious holiday, and radio stations in several markets banned it. The ban was lifted after the 13-year-old Boyd appeared before church leaders to talk about the lyrics. Jimmy's recording career essentially lasted until 1967 and encompassed such hits as "Dennis the Menace," sung with Rosemary Clooney, and several duets with Frankie Laine, including "The Little Boy and the Old Man," and "Tell Me a Story."

Jimmy appeared on Bing's GE show twice in 1953 and sang a couple of duets with him. On television, Boyd made several appearances on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in the early 1950s and moved into acting. From 1958 to 1961, he portrayed Howard Meechim, the high school boyfriend on *Bachelor Father*, a sitcom that starred John Forsythe and Noreen Corcoran. He also played the teenage nephew of Betty White's character on *Date with the Angels*, a late-1950s sitcom. In 1960, Boyd appeared as a biology student in *Inherit the Wind* with Spencer Tracy and, the same year, married Yvonne Craig, an actress he met while appearing in *High Time* with Bing. Craig would go on to play Batgirl in the 1960s TV series *Batman*. Their marriage ended after two years. Soon after marrying, Boyd was drafted into the Army and later performed in two USO shows in Vietnam. His final interaction with Bing was when he was the guest star in *The Bing Crosby Show* sitcom shown on October 12, 1964.

Dom DeLuise, the mirthful, moon-faced comic actor who was a regular on Dean Martin's television variety show in the 1960s and 1970s and provided frequent comedic support in movies starring Mel Brooks and Burt Reynolds, died on May 4. He was 75. The Brooklyn-born entertainer, who got his start on stage and in children's television in the 1950s, emerged on TV variety shows in the 1960s. The same decade, he launched his film career, including early roles in comedies such as *The Glass Bottom Boat*. But he was best known for his movie work with Brooks and Reynolds. Beginning with playing a greedy family priest in Brooks' *The Twelve Chairs* in 1970, Mr. DeLuise went on to appear in Brooks' *Blazing Saddles, Silent Movie, History of the World: Part I* and *Robin Hood: Men in Tights*. He also played the mozzarella-oozing Pizza the Hutt in Brooks' "Star Wars" parody, *Spaceballs*. Bing and Dom first worked together on the Hollywood Palace show of February 18, 1967 and Bing had a brief part in Dom DeLuise's skit. Bing played the director of the TV commercial which Dom is 'filming' for a bank. Dom has it letter perfect - until the cameras start to roll. This can be seen on YouTube. Mr. DeLuise was a staple on "The Dean Martin Show" and this where he ran into Bing again. The show of October 19, 1967 included a golf sketch with Bing and Dean. DeLuise played their loud, bad-joke-spouting caddie who arrives at a tee in a golf cart topped with a colorful umbrella: "I'm sorry I'm late," he said. "I had a flat tire. That's the first time I had a hole in one." This too can be viewed on YouTube. Their final work together was on the Dean Martin Show of November 6, 1969. Dom DeLuise didn't fare as well as the star of his own TV series. "Lotsa Luck," a sitcom in which he played a bachelor

New York City bus company's lost-and-found department custodian, ran on NBC in 1973 and 1974. He also starred in the 1987-88 syndicated sitcom "The Dom DeLuise Show," in which he played a Hollywood barber and widowed single father of a 10-year-old daughter. In 1991, he hosted the short-lived syndicated return of the classic comedy-reality show "Candid Camera."

Jack Lawrence, a songwriter who wrote the lyrics for hits such as "All or Nothing at All," "Tenderly" and "Beyond the Sea," died on March 22. He was 96. In a songwriting career that began in the early 1930s, Lawrence had his songs recorded by artists such as Bing, Nat King Cole, the Andrews Sisters, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday and Tony Bennett. Among his songs, written in collaboration, are "Sunrise Serenade," which was recorded by Glenn Miller; and "Yes, My Darling Daughter," a hit for Dinah Shore. Singer-pianist Michael Feinstein, a friend, said Lawrence had lots of hits through the years but comparatively few became standards. Lawrence's song "Linda," which he wrote for his lawyer's young daughter, Linda Eastman—she later married Paul McCartney—was a big hit for Buddy Clark. And "If I Didn't Care" established the success of the Ink Spots. The son of Russian immigrants, Lawrence was born in Brooklyn on April 7, 1912. He was a self-taught pianist and began writing songs at age 10. Lawrence, who served in the Coast Guard and the Merchant Marine during World War II, continued writing songs throughout the war. His songwriting took him to Hollywood—he shared a best song Oscar nomination with Richard Myers for "Hold My Hand" in the 1954 comedy *Susan Slept Here*—and Broadway, for which he wrote music and lyrics for a number of productions. Bing recorded seven of Lawrence's songs including "Ciribiribin" and "Symphony".

GORD ATKINSON'S 'THE CROSBY YEARS'

Gord's regular look at some of the many celebrities he has interviewed over the years who had a connection with Bing. This time, it's none other than Frank Sinatra!

The majority of teenagers and young adults in the 1940s were devoted fans of either Bing Crosby or Frank Sinatra. There was little if indeed any fraternization between the two groups. Seldom did these committed musical camps meet; or to put it in more poetic terms, "never the twain did meet." Or as composer-lyricist Sunny Skylar stated in his 1945 hit song, "If it's not Bing, it's Frank, *It's Gotta Be This or That.*"

It was the measure of Bing that he welcomed Frank to his musical fold in the early 1940's. They were only rivals in the minds of their respective fans. They were not only frequent co-stars, but good friends. Their admiration for one another and their artistry knew no bounds.

In his last years most of Frank Sinatra's engagements were on behalf of charitable causes. It was in the planning and preparation of such an event that I first met him. Rich Little had appeared with him at several fund-raising concerts and in return Sinatra had agreed to do a benefit performance in Rich's home town, on behalf of the Ottawa Civic Hospital's Special Care Nursery.

A short time later, in Palm Springs, California, while on a radio assignment, my wife and I were privileged to visit the Sinatra estate. The night before Rich had taken part in a high-priced benefit, arranged by Sinatra's wife Barbara, on behalf of a local hospital. Rich and his wife were weekend guests at the Sinatra's along with other celebrities who had taken part in the fund-raiser, Debby Boone, Peter Falk and the late arranger-conductor, Don Costa.

Upon our arrival at their desert complex, where we were to meet the Littles and accompany them to their home in Malibu, we were invited to join the Sinatras and their guests for Sunday brunch. This unexpected invitation gave us a rare insight into the social graces the Sinatras extended to their friends and acquaintances. As strangers, who must have appeared a little uncomfortable in such high profile company, we were immediately put at ease by our famous host.

I had a delightful conversation with Frank about his boyhood idol Bing. He had heard excerpts from my Crosby radio anthology and seemed quite interested in the series and my long friendship with Bing. "How did you ever get Crosby to sit still so long?" he asked with a smile, "all those questions and anecdotes. He was my friend and I could never keep him from moving on. We might meet at a cocktail party, start talking and when I would turn around to get my glass refilled, he'd be gone – like he went right through the wall. But then, he was never comfortable at cocktail parties." Then he added as a warm afterthought – "but he was a wonderful friend and a great guy."

Frank Sinatra welcomes Gord to his home in 1982.

While we were talking, to our surprise, an old Crosby movie, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, came on the screen of an overhead TV. We both thought it was an amusing coincidence.

During brunch he thoughtfully arranged for his guests to receive a personally autographed copy of his

definitive album, *Trilogy*. It was to be released by Reprise Records a few days later, and the advance copies immediately became collector's items. Without asking, he autographed my collection, "To Gordon, Enjoy! Frank Sinatra." One of the songs from the set became one of his biggest hits, *New York, New York*.

The Sinatra property was situated on a street named after him, and was encircled by a high fence that not only assured privacy to those inside but hid the grounds from public view. Contrary to his media image of flamboyance and hostility, the atmosphere at his estate was inviting and hospitable. The guard at the gatehouse looked more like a friendly neighbour from Andy Griffin's *Mayberry* than a member of an entourage.

The residents of Palm Springs referred to the Sinatra estate as *The Compound*. It was an accurate description, since there were several structures on the property, the main building being a one-story mansion that rambled across the grounds. We entered by a spacious recreation room where the brunch was taking place.

Barbara Sinatra graciously took us and the Littles on a tour of her beautiful home, where we admired her art collection and the many mementos of Sinatra's career, including his Oscar for his riveting supporting performance as Maggio in *From Here to Eternity*. We were surprised and intrigued to discover that he was a railroad buff with a most unusual collection of miniature trains, which included locomotives and railway cars as both hobby and art pieces. One of his prize possessions was a gold-plated model of an early western train. In the middle of the property there was an old restored caboose that he had remodelled as a sauna. Four guest cottages with individual swimming pools were within view of the main house. All the rooms throughout the estate were named after Sinatra hit songs, with one romantic ballad borrowed from his *High Society* co-star Bing, *True Love*.

Of all the citations, awards, international acclaim and glowing reviews that Frank Sinatra received throughout his career, a comment from his boyhood hero and musical mentor, Bing, was among his most meaningful and treasured statements. It was during one of my interviews with Bing that he had this to say about Sinatra the performer, and Frank, the man: "I hold him in great respect. He is one of the few singers in my opinion who creates a mood when he sings. It's not just the song or what he says, it's an ambience or attitude – a mood is the best way to describe it – Nat Cole did that too. Frank really owns an audience when he starts singing; he has a tremendous command and can sing any kind of song that I can think of – he can handle it. He has great communication and talent. He is a remarkable person and an outstanding entertainer."

Upon hearing of the sudden death of Bing on a golf course in Spain, in 1977, Frank Sinatra made this heartfelt tribute to his long-time friend and mentor: "He was the idol of my youth, the father of my career and the dear friend of my maturity."

Gord Atkinson

MORE OF BING'S RAREST RECORDS

John Newton's last article was so well received, we asked him for a follow-up.

In an effort to slightly expand upon my article on Bing's rarest records in the last issue, a few more records merit inclusion in such a listing of recordings. Again, as with the previous group, these recordings were not intended to be released commercially, but were pressed in very limited, often tiny, numbers for various private reasons. And, similarly, the contents of these records are, for the most part, familiar to Bing fans and collectors due to their inclusion in reissue LPs or CDs over the years. The original records, however, remain quite rare and are practically impossible to obtain in their original form.

"OLD LAUGHING LOSER" - DLA-1984X

As a clause in some of his contracts with Paramount Pictures, Bing was occasionally able to involve himself in independent production. He had previously done so with *East Side Of Heaven* and from February to April 1940 Bing was at work at Universal Studios making *If I Had My Way*. And, as was the practice for all his films of this period, Bing made commercial recordings of the songs that were featured in this film for the Decca company.

Bing recorded four songs from the film on April 12th, the last song in the session being "The Pessimistic Character". Following an acceptable "A" take of this song (and possibly a "B" take as well), Bing apparently decided to have a little fun and record a parody of this last title, with his efforts directed at David Butler, the Universal Studios director of the film and a personal friend.

Mr. Crosby and Mr. Butler obviously worked well together and had similar interests. Bing's parody lyrics, which he probably wrote, make mention of Butler's prowess on the tennis court and also mention Alice

Faye, who Butler had directed in the 1937 Universal film *You're A Sweetheart.*

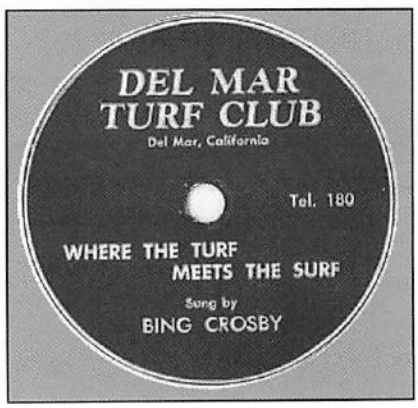
Another source has claimed that Bing's mention of Miss Faye on this personal recording had to do with a romantic link between Butler and Faye, but this is not the case. David Butler, like Bing, was a horse racing aficionado, maintaining his own race horses - and one of Butler's race horses was named "Alice Faye". This factor puts Bing's lyrics into an entirely different light. Following the very end of the recording Bing is heard to say "Print up..." before being quickly cut off. He was most probably instructing the recording engineer that he wanted to "print up" a copy of this recording for David Butler.

"WHERE THE TURF MEETS THE SURF" - DLA-2505B

Bing's link and involvement with the horse racing establishment at Del Mar is well known, and as an interested party he did what he could from time to time to promote that institution. Even while singing at a private party in 1937 he slipped in a "plug" for Del Mar. In August 1940 a screening of Bing's film *Rhythm On The River* was held at Del Mar with the proceedings broadcast, including a star-studded rendition of the song "Where The Turf Meets The Surf", inspired by and dedicated to Del Mar.

On July 5, 1941, at the end of one of his Decca recording sessions, Bing made a short recording of the song comprised of an opening instrumental fanfare, and instrumental chorus and a single vocal chorus by Bing. This recording was to be played over Del Mar's loudspeaker system at the beginning of each racing day.

Two "takes" of the recording were made, with the second, the "B" take, selected for use at Del Mar. The selected take was dubbed for separate private pressings, to be made for use at the race club; and, knowing that the recording would be used frequently, the privately dubbed pressings were made in a novel manner to accommodate extensive use. The pressings were made with the song dubbed twice onto each side of a standard ten-inch 78 rpm record, so that each two-sided record had the same recording appearing four times on one record. The labels of the private pressings state "Del Mar Turf Club" and, of course, have the song's title and Bing's name. The labels are blue with silver printing and the records bear the dubbing matrix number TEL 180. At least a couple of copies of the "Del Mar Turf Club" pressings have made their way into private collections.



It may be of special interest to record collectors that the original recording at Decca was made in a unique manner. Each separate recording made in the 78 rpm era was usually recorded on a separate wax master platter with a separate "take" designated for each recording for identification and selection purposes. This particular recording, however, was recorded in a different format, allowable only because of the relatively short duration of the song and, also, because it was a private recording that would not be mass-produced as pressings from the original master or metal parts.

The surviving original over-sized test pressing is clearly marked DLA 2505B, both on the label and engraved on the outer edge of the pressing (it is a ten-inch recording appearing on an eleven-inch, one-sided test pressing). The recorded song appears twice on the test, and each recording is different, so that both take "A" and take "B" appear on the one-sided test marked DLA 2505B, separated by a blank area between the two recordings.

"CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TO NEW YORK STAFF" - DLA 2273

In the spirit of the holiday season, as has often been the case for companies and various businesses, Decca Records' studio in Los Angeles held a holiday party in 1940. The party commenced following a Bing Crosby - Connie Boswell - Bob Crosby recording session on December 13, 1940.

Decca Records chief Jack Kapp was present for the festivities, as was Decca's musical director, Victor Young. In an attempt to share the festivities of the season and send greetings to others within the company, a recording was made to send these greetings eastward to the New York office.

The record opens with a spirited version of "Jingle Bells" by Bob Crosby's Bob Cats, followed by a quick comment by Bing that flusters Jack Kapp's opening greeting remarks. After his speech, Mr. Kapp turns the microphone over to Bing who sings a brief "Happy Christmas". Other brief greetings and personal comments are directed to certain members of Decca's administrative staff by Connie Boswell, Bob Crosby and Victor Young, after which the recording closes with an up-tempo vocal rendition of "Jingle Bells" by Bing and Connie Boswell (who sings that she doesn't know the words).

"LOVE AND MARRIAGE" - A-19773

This record is somewhat puzzling, both from its reason for being and because of its scarcity. The record itself is a ten-inch, one-sided pressing, pressed in clear cherry-red vinyl with a plain white label with the title, matrix number, and "not for commercial use" type-written on the label. No artist's name appears, but Bing personally signed his name on the label.

The recording, both by title and accompaniment, is clearly from the Buddy Cole period of the mid-1950's, and may well be one of the recordings Bing had made during this period for one of his subsequent transcribed CBS radio programs.

But, why was this late 78 rpm record made?

Throughout his long career Bing occasionally had private recordings made which he sent to a friend or friends, and perhaps this is the provenance of this record? This particular record was obtained at the Crosby Estate Auction, held in San Francisco in 1982. I've attempted to learn more about it through correspondence and conversations with several long-time, advanced Bing collectors, but those I've contacted had never heard of it. Perhaps someone who reads this article may be able to shed some light on its origins.

"GOING MY WAY" in German

A recently acquired record might well fit into this category as well, featuring Bing singing in both phonetic German and phonetic French. A friend had this in his collection for years but was unable to find it among his many thousands of records. Prior to a recent collectors' get-together he advised that he'd finally found the record, and when we met he graciously handed it over to me for my Bing collection.

The record is a 12-inch reference recording of songs that were broadcast during World War II, with the "German" selection, at least, broadcast over ABSIE, the American Broadcasting Station In Europe and aimed at the German military and civilian population. The labels are blue "Columbia Reference Recording" labels with type-written information including the titles, the artist (Bing Crosby), and the "Program" on each side specified as "GERMAN" and "FRENCH" respectively. The labels also state "For Reference Purposes Only", and identify the sides as Part 1 of 2 and Part 2 of 2.

On the German side, Bing sings "Going My Way", and on the French side he sings two separate songs, "My Heart Tells Me" and "The Last Time I Saw Paris". There is no announcing or speaking either before or after the songs, all of which are accompanied only by piano. An interesting highlight of Bing's singing of "Going My Way" occurred toward the end of the song when a telephone began to ring. Bing, without hesitation, didn't miss a beat, and finished the song splendidly.

While the record is not dated, the German title was most probably featured in the ABSIE broadcast that originated from London on September 4, 1944. While currently unknown, at least to me, the French selections could well have occurred during the same broadcast, or one that was broadcast at around this date, a mere 10 days after the German forces in Paris had surrendered. Perhaps another reader might be able to supply further details on the French selections?

****

As indicated in my initial listing of rare Bing records, I've purposely refrained from listing test pressings of unissued takes of commercial recordings, including blow-ups, since many of these types of records exist in various forms within a number of collections. This is not to say that these are common records, but relatively speaking they are certainly in a different category. Also missing from these listings are records made by or for the motion picture studios for whom Bing worked during his long career. Such "movie studio discs" are a genre unto themselves, some of which are very rare while others are fairly common. For several years I have been personally working on a "discography" of Bing's movie studio records, and this has proven to be an extensive and on-going project.

Greg Van Beek's fine article and listing that appeared in a recent issue of BING is a wonderful initial review of such records, but many additions and variations exist and a more comprehensive and detailed "discography" is my goal.

With that said, another genre of Bing's rare non-commercial recordings remains, that being radio broadcast records. For a future article I will be preparing a listing to detail a number of some of these obscure record rarities.

John Newton

High Society: Grace Kelly and Hollywood **(continued from page 17)**

The *Daily Telegraph* of June 25 contained the following on its Letters page.

SIR – Christopher Silvester in his review of my book *High Society: Grace Kelly and Hollywood* (Features, June 13) asserts that Grace Kelly's singing of *True Love* in the film *High Society* "was dubbed by Niki Schenck, the 17-year-old daughter of Nick Schenck, the boss of MGM's parent company".

On the contrary: the MGM archives are quite clear about the date (February 9, 1956) when Grace and Bing Crosby recorded the Cole Porter song in the studio – and the dates on which the playback accompanied the filming of that scene (March 13 and 14).

The rarely seen Nicola Schenck, who was 22 (not 17) in 1956, never sang or dubbed for anyone, in any movie.

Donald Spoto

London SW1

(Editor: Well, that's cleared that query up but it's created another. We had February 22 as the date the song was recorded. I wonder who is right?)

KEEPING TRACK

Ken Crossland looks at the new releases

COMPACT DISCS

Bing Crosby Through The Years – Vol. 3 1951-52 Sepia Records #1129 UK £7.99
In The Cool, Cool, Cool Of The Evening (with Jane Wyman) 2. Misto Christofo Columbo (with Jane Wyman) 3. Bonne Nuit 4. Your Own Little House* 5. Christmas In Killarney 6. It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas 7. When The World Was Young 8. Domino 9. A Weaver Of Dreams 10. I Still See Elisa 11. At Last! At Last! 12. The Isle Of Innisfree 13. A Flight Of Fancy 14. Just For You 15. Sailing Down The Chesapeake Bay 16. Ida, Sweet As Apple Cider 17. Nobody's Sweetheart 18. It Had To Be You 19. Two Shillelagh O'Sullivan 20. Rosaleen 21. Don't Ever Be Afraid To Go Home 22. I'll Si-Si Ya In Bahia (with The Andrews Sisters) 23. The Live Oak Tree (with The Andrews Sisters) 24. Ol' Spring Fever 25. Just A Little Lovin' 26. Till The End Of The World
* = *new to CD*

As ever, pride of place this month goes to Sepia's continuation of the marvellous chronological series of Bing's commercial output. This volume, the third since Sepia took up the reins from Jonzo, covers the period from June 1951 to April 1952. Here's what William Ruhlmann, writing in the All Music Guide on the Internet, has to say about it:

"In the ten-month period of 1951-1952 covered by this, the third volume in Sepia Records' series of chronological commercial recordings by Bing Crosby (which follows 51 volumes of Jonzo Records' The Chronological Bing Crosby series), Crosby, after 20 years of dominating popular music, finally was falling behind his successors on the pop charts, superseded by a group of sometimes similar-sounding male singers who were a decade (Frankie Laine, Perry Como, Tony Martin) or two (Guy Mitchell, Tony Bennett) his junior. (Meanwhile, he continued to rank in the Top Ten of box office stars and to maintain his weekly radio show.) This fall-off was only beginning to be apparent as he went into the recording studio in June 1951 to cut songs from his latest movie, *Here Comes the Groom*, including Hoagy Carmichael and Johnny Mercer's "In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening," which would just miss the Top Ten and win the Oscar for Best Song. The delightfully nonsensical lyric was set to a Dixieland arrangement, allowing the singer (joined by co-star Jane Wyman and vocal group Three Hits and a Miss) to show off his jazz chops. That was the best of the movie songs, but Crosby typically went on in his later sessions during the year and into 1952 to cut Christmas and Irish material (in one case, "Christmas in Killarney," at the same time); re-tooled French tunes (among them "Domino," which reached the Top 20); new Broadway music; reworked versions of oldies; more movie music for his next picture, *Just for You*; and even a little country & western (including the Top 20 "Till the End of the World"). Of this typically varied repertoire, his best performances tended to come when a song had a lyric reflecting his own maturity, such as "When the World Was Young" and (from the Alan Jay Lerner / Frederick Loewe musical *Paint Your Wagon*) "I Still See Elisa." He also clearly enjoyed collaborating with a Dixieland group including Red Nichols and Matty Matlock on a quartet of old songs from the 1910s and '20s, "Sailing Down the Chesapeake Bay," "Ida, Sweet as Apple Cider," "Nobody's Sweetheart," and "It Had to Be You." (The songs were recorded for the radio show, but they were so good that Decca mastered them for commercial release.) Not that he didn't seem to be having fun putting on a brogue in "Two Shillelagh O'Sullivan" or trading faux-South American phrasing with the Andrews Sisters on "I'll Si-Si Ya in Bahia." But as he approached his 49th birthday, Crosby was becoming more of a retrospective singer, which didn't help him on the hit parade."
Excellent sound quality on this disc, great booklet from our editor and whilst all but one of the tracks have been on CD before, many are still quite scarce. And of course, the early Fifties Crosby tone is simply magnificent. Buy it! Better still, buy two.

Bing & Satchmo DRG Records DRG 91515 USA $16.98
1. Muskrat Ramble 2. Sugar (That Sugar Baby Of Mine) 3. The Preacher 4. Dardanella 5. Let's Sing Like A

Dixieland Band 6. Way Down Yonder In New Orleans 7. Brother Bill 8. Little Ol' Tune 9. At The Jazz Band Ball 10. Rocky Mountain Moon 11. Bye, Bye Blues 12. Lazy River.

I trailered this release last time and Greg Van Beek has already reviewed earlier in this issue. The tracks are as listed above - all 12 from the original sessions, of course. How nice it would have been had there been unissued or alternate masters. Will Friedwald's sleeve note suggests that might have been a possibility because he seeks to clear up once and for all the question of whether the album was recorded "live" or whether Bing and Louis added their vocals to pre-recorded tracks. Quoting a direct conversation with Billy May, who conducted the sessions, Will tells us that it was indeed all done live, albeit with some after-the-event "cleaning up" by the two vocalists. Well, Mr. May was there and he would know, but I for one am now left even more puzzled by the lack of spontaneity between Bing and his friend Louis. Don't get me wrong; it's a marvellous album, but where is the sense of fun that was prevalent in just about every other pairing of these two? As you will gather, I am still not convinced.

Bing Crosby: The Jazz Sides **101 Distribution** **Europe** **c$16.00**

1. The Song Is You 2. Mountain Greenery 3. Cheek To Cheek 4. Deed I Do 5. Heat Wave 6. Blue Room 7. Have You Met Miss Jones? 8. I've Got Five Dollars 9. They All Laughed 10. Nice Work If You Can Get It 11. September In The Rain 12. Jeepers Creepers 13. Fancy Meeting You Here 14. On A Slow Boat To China 15. I Can't Get Started 16. Hindustan 17. It Happened In Monterey 18. You Came A Long Way From St. Louis 19. Love Won't Let You Get Away 20. How About You 21. Brazil 22. Isle Of Capri 23. Say Si Si 24. Calcutta 25. Love Won't Let You Get Away 26. Mack The Knife

An album in similar vein to Bing's collaboration with Satchmo. Features all the tracks from "Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings" and "Fancy Meeting You Here" (with Rosie of course) plus a bonus track from the "Bing With A Beat" album. Jazz sides? Swing maybe, but let's not split hairs.

Bing Crosby - Vol. 1 **Revivendo** **RVPC 057** **Brazil** **R$ 21.90**

1. St. Louis Blues 2. Moonlight And Shadows 3. Two Cigarettes In The Dark 4. I Cried For You 5. I Want My Mama 6. Deep Purple 7. I Can't Begin To Tell You 8. No Te Importe Saber 9. I'll Be Seeing You 10. On The Sunny Side Of The Street 11. Begin The Beguine 12. Ol' Man River 13. September Song 14. Blues In The Night 15. Copacabana 16. Golden Earrings 17. Young At Heart 18. After You've Gone 19. Domino 20. Lullaby (Jocelyn) 21. The Anniversary Song

Bing Crosby - Vol. 2 **Revivendo** **RVPC 058** **Brazil** **R$ 21.90**

1. I Apologize 2. I Found A Million Dollar Baby 3. Shadow Waltz 4. Please 5. The Moon Was Yellow 6. My Melancholy Baby 7. A Thousand Violins 8. You Belong To My Heart 9. It's Been A Long, Long Time 10. Dolores 11. Miss You 12. Blue Skies 13. Swinging On A Star 14. Long Ago And Far Away 15. Baía 16. Just One Of Those Things 17. Ballerina 18. South America, Take It Away (with The Andrews Sisters) 19. Night And Day 20. You Made Me Love You 21. Maria Bonita

Bing Crosby - Vol. 3 **Revivendo** **RVPC 059** **Brazil** **R$ 21.90**

1. Star Dust 2. Dinah 3. Temptation 4. I Kiss Your Hand, Madame 5. Mary's A Grand Old Name 6. Amor 7. Tea For Two (with Mary Martin) 8. Deep In The Heart Of Texas 9. These Foolish Things 10. Embraceable You 11. Flores Negras 12. Don't Fence Me In (with The Andrews Sisters) 13. If I Loved You 14. San Fernando Valley 15. Hasta Manana 16. Symphony 17. Easy To Love 18. Poinciana 19. Siboney 20. All My Love 21. Riders In The Sky

Just as we were going to press, Joao Daudt in Brazil told us of three Bing CDs recently issued there on the Revivendo label. They sell for R$ 21.90 (just over US$11) and can be ordered over the Internet at www.revivendomusicas.com.br/ . The albums were part of a cultural project presenting the greatest all-time singers and Bing was the first name chosen. At this stage we don't know about the quality of the albums but they look to be a very interesting mix of songs.

Sadly, this is all that we have this time in terms of new CDs that feature Bing, but we would be remiss not to mention one other new release that features Bing's music if not his voice.

Learn To Croon - John Gill & His Sentimental Serenaders
Stomp Off Records #1424 USA $14.95

John Gill is an ICC member and this CD features him singing 23 of Bing's early hits, backed by a 12-piece orchestra on titles such as "Did You Ever See A Dream Walking?", "A Faded Summer Love", "Muddy Water" and "I'm Through With Love". John, with

great good sense, makes no attempt to imitate Bing, but his voice is nevertheless pleasant and tuneful. Of greatest interest however are the arrangements which are faithful to Bing's originals, but with the benefits of digital stereo recording. It's a CD that is well worth adding to your collection.

Barry Whittingham kindly sent me his latest CD compilation called "Bing Crosby & Jimmy Dorsey" which has 23 tracks from the Kraft Music Hall of 1936/7 on which Bing is accompanied by the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra. See *Trading Post* for further details.

DOWNLOADS

In our last issue, I mentioned the Downloads available from iTunes. Undoubtedly CDs are being replaced rapidly by downloads and the Amazon company is now a big player in the field. Amazon.com has 2655 Bing tracks available for download as MP3 files at prices varying from $0.89 to $0.99. There are many repetitions in the list and be warned, the quality can vary. The *Hey Jude* tracks for instance run very slow and if you have the software you will have to increase the speed by 8.5% to have the tracks playing properly. Many complete radio shows are listed, many with the wrong dates quoted and again the quality varies tremendously. It is possible to preview the tracks and this is strongly recommended if you want to make sure that the standard of the track is acceptable. Surprisingly, the British arm of Amazon- amazon.co.uk - exceeds its USA parent on this occasion and has over 4300 tracks of Bing's available for download at prices between 69p and 79p.
This development will not be good news for the many ICC members who do not have Internet access but I am afraid that it's what's happening out there.

No new DVDs to report this month, so it's straight on to a look at the world of the Internet.

What's On The Web?

The Internet encyclopaedia, Wikipedia, is always an interesting site to peruse and they have a very interesting feature on the world's best selling music artists. The preamble makes some sensible points about the problems of compiling such lists, pointing out several constraints including an almost inevitable bias in favour of modern artists. Despite that, three of the top four artists listed could hardly be described as "modern". The top two, with sales in excess of 1 billion, are shown as Elvis Presley and the Beatles. Elvis of course died in the same year as Bing, whilst the Beatles stopped working together in 1970. In the next category - 500 million to 999 million - we find Michael Jackson and - you guessed it - Bing. Bearing in mind the review quoted earlier about the *Through The Years* set, I think its quite an achievement for a singer who seemingly passed his chart peak in 1950 to be still in the top four over half a century later. The scale of that achievement becomes even greater when you look down the next grouping - 200 to 499 million records - and find no-one from the pre-rock "good" music era. Indeed it's not until you get down to 100 to 199 million that other familiar names start to appear - Sinatra, Perry and Patti Page. To find any more - the likes of Barbra Streisand, Nat Cole and Tony Bennett - you have to go all the way down to 50 to 74 million sales. An interesting read which you can find at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Best_selling_music_artists

The Internet auction pages continue to come up with items that you would never have expected to see. A *Holiday Inn* bus pass perhaps? Yes, it was there, issued by the St. Louis Public Service Company in September 1944. Perhaps of greater interest are items from the collection of my good friend **Al Sutton**, although quite how Al would have reacted to the idea of them put up for auction is another matter. I first began corresponding with Al, who edited "BINGANG", the journal of the American Club Crosby for many years, in 1976. Al was busy compiling a book called "Lyrical About Bing", which featured songs that had something to do with Bing in the lyric or title. A song called "Crooner's Lullaby" crept in by virtue of Bing's image being used on the sheet music. Now, that piece of music plus Bing's reply to Al's enquiry about it, has just fetched $200.

> "You certainly have made progress in your search for songs or material that mention my name, and the little book is going to be very useful to me in the future, I'm sure, when I'm trying to collect material for future use," Bing wrote to Al. "I have no recollection whatever of "Crooner's Lullaby." I did sing quite a few things that

Arthur Johnston and Sam Coslow wrote because they were on the staff there at Paramount when I made some pictures, and several of the songs that Johnston and Coslow wrote were very successful for me. I can't understand why it is dedicated to Gary Evans Crosby which, of course, is the name of my oldest son."

Best for now.

ken@kencrossland.co.uk **http://www.kencrossland.co.uk**

The Road to Maidenhead

Founder member Jean Rainey rediscovered us a year or two ago and is enthusiastically acquiring new DVDs and CDs. Back in 1952, she wrote this article about Bing's golfing adventure at Maidenhead for the October / November issue of the club's *Crosbyana* magazine which at that time was edited by Reg Davis and Geoff Milne, both of whom are still keen readers of the magazine today.

I don't suppose that Bing ever wants to hear the name "Maidenhead" again and. After, what he went through on September 21st, one can hardly blame him. However, the National Playing Fields Association ended up the day several hundred pounds better off, and several thousand Bing fans went home that night happy that they had finally seen that most amiable gentleman in the flesh.

Most of you will have read in the papers about the pandemonium that broke loose on the Temple Golf Course; this is quite true – it was one mad rush from beginning to end, but what you are all interested in is . . . what is Bing really like? Does he look the same as he does on the screen? Does he really have that middle aged spread that Bob Hope and certain magazines keep talking about?

The answer to the first question is NO, he doesn't look quite the same as he does on the screen, he looks younger. This is a fact; we all know that Bing carries his age well on the screen, but that could easily be down to make-up, but after seeing him in person it is clear that his youthful appearance is no trick of make-up, but an actual fact. As for his alleged spreading waist-line, it just doesn't exist; the "plump Mr. Crosby" myth was exploded before my eyes. Some of the famous Crosby characteristics were well in evidence – the pipe, the friendly smile, and the flashy clothes. Bing was wearing a maroon short, canary yellow cardigan, brown trousers and shoes and a check golf cap.

Knowing nothing whatsoever about golf, I can't say how good Bing is at the game but, judging by shouts of approval from some of the golfers in the crowd, I gathered that he was very good. It looked as though Bing was being arrested as he tried to make his way from hole to hole. He had a policeman on each side of him propelling him by the arms, one in front clearing the path and one behind trying to keep the crowd from hemming Bing in too closely.

Altogether it was a most enjoyable afternoon – one which I shall remember for many years. Although I didn't have the pleasure or privilege of speaking to Bing in person, I can quote the words of someone who did have a very close contact with Bing on that day – Donald Peers. He said this from the stage of a Nottingham theatre: "You've probably heard that spot of bother we had at Maidenhead this week-end, but I want to tell you about Bing Crosby because he was really the main attraction. Everyone was just there to try to get close enough to touch the most wonderful, most fabulous man in the entertainment business. He is a wonderful person and I marvel at his patience with the hundreds of people who tried to get near him."

I think that just about sums up the day at Maidenhead, and it seems that Bing went on with his show-stealing when he appeared later that day at yet another charity show at the Stoll Theatre, London.

Jean Rainey

The Microsoft Bing

We mentioned this new search engine on page 7 and as you would expect it has been discussed on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum

Howard Crosby commented "Whether or not Microsoft's new release has anything to do with Uncle Bing or not, or whether it is merely coincidence, it can only be good. More and more younger people may accidently discover Bing Crosby because of this, through internet searches or whatever, so how can this be bad?"

However **Steven Lewis** demurred, saying:

"It's going to take much more than a search engine called "Bing" to resuscitate the Old Groaner. For the past 80 years "Bing" has primarily evoked memories of Bing Crosby. If the new Microsoft search engine is

successful, the name will instead bring to mind a search engine not an entertainer. "Bing Crosby" will be like "bada bing" and "bing cherries" and "Rudolf Bing." People don't generally search for the term "Google" when they use Google and I doubt they will search for "Bing" when they use Bing. We've had a little burst of PR for Bing as Microsoft rolled out its new search engine. This burst will soon be history and the Groaner will once again fade into the background.

I've been cataloging daily the mentions of BC in the media since 1996. Outside this recent burst associated with Microsoft's search engine, 2009 had been the worst year yet for Der Bingle. For the first time in memory Turner did not celebrate Bing's birthday this year. I've resorted to updating "What's News" weekly instead of daily and worldwide membership in the ICC has fallen to fewer than 500. I doubt there will be an ICC in 10 years. The culture has moved on and Bing has taken his place as a historical figure. And the typical American youngster is not much interested in what to them is ancient history."

Well, we must have caught Steven on a bad day! It certainly is a struggle to keep Bing's name alive but to paraphrase Mark Twain, the reports of the ICC's death have been greatly exaggerated. We still have over 900 members worldwide although USA members have dropped below the 500 mark. Will we still be here in 2019? Who knows, but we'll do our best.

Announcement

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY
44th ANNUAL DINNER / MEETING
Weetwood Hall, Conference Centre & Hotel
Otley Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire. LS16 5PS, UK
Telephone: 0113 230 6000
Website: www.weetwood.co.uk
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4th 2009, 2pm - 10pm

A cordial and warm invitation is extended to all members, their partners and friends to attend our forthcoming dinner / meeting. This is the 44th annual dinner held in Leeds to celebrate Bing's life and times, and as usual, we shall have some interesting DVD material for you to see, using the excellent facilities at Weetwood Hall available for this purpose.

We have brought the official start time forward to 2 p.m. to enable us to pack more into the time we have but apart from this, Bing music will be playing from 1 p.m. onwards alongside a PowerPoint presentation of Bing photos.

A three-course Carvery Dinner will be provided. Please book by sending a cheque for £24 per person (£20 for the meal, £4 for room-hire expenses) to Michael Crampton. Y'All Come! You will be amongst friends.

Bing Crosby
Bing
-Hollywood-

December 2, 1963

Dear Gord:

Of course I'll be delighted to do the tape interview with you along the lines that you suggest. In other words, you'll send me some questions and I will provide answers on tape and send you the tape.

I will leave some pauses between my answers, so that you will be able to cut in the questions and in this way put together an interview suitable for your purposes.

This method of procedure would be infinitely more preferable than a telephone interview - both from the standpoint of quality and from personal feeling.

So I'll be awaiting receipt of your questions and just as soon as I am doing some taping, I'll provide the answers thereto.

Happy to hear that everything's going along well for you and that your young ones are coming on in good shape.

I suppose with Christmas hard upon us now, you're going to have a hectic two or three weeks. I know we are here.

All best regards to you and your family -

As ever,

Bing Crosby

BC:lm
Mr. Gord Atkinson
1159 Adirondack Drive
Ottawa 5, Ontario, Canada

LOOK

NOW MORE THAN 7 MILLION CIRCULATION

NEW ATTACK ON DREAD PARKINSON'S DISEASE

25¢ JULY 17, 1962

EXCLUSIVE NEW PICTURES OF BING CROSBY'S SECOND FAMILY

SEATTLE 3 WASH
N 80TH ST
IR2
R3 11-64

Designed & Printed by CITY-PRINTERS.COM, Blackburn House, Ropery Lane, Co. Durham, DH3 3NN, United Kingdom.
Tel:+44 (0)191 387 4248 Email gary@city-printers.com